Shakespeare in South Africa: literary theory and practice

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Abstract

This thesis explores the development of a "South African Shakespeare". Relying on post-colonial theory as a primary framework, it views colonised culture not as secondary and responsive, but as primary and creative. The main work of the thesis is to trace the role played by "Shakespeare", as a set of texts and as an icon, in a particular trajectory of writing in English in South Africa in the first half of the twentieth century.

A secondary framework is that of politically radical Shakespearean scholarship. I engage with this Anglo-American work in order to determine how it has been manifest in a tradition of South African scholarship. I seek to determine which elements can be useful to a specifically South African theoretical framework, one that is able to describe the faces of a South African Shakespeare. En route to this discussion, I begin by exploring the objections made by this scholarship against the kind of humanism that has been used by English literary studies. I demonstrate that humanism, although in many ways problematically invoked and enacted by English literary studies, has other applications in South African history and in the development of writing in English in South Africa. At the same time, I acknowledge English literary studies' relation to colonialism, and the implications of this history for the presence and use of Shakespeare in South African culture.

I go on to examine the use of a series of texts, and a powerful symbol, signified by the concept "Shakespeare", in the development of a resistant South African writing in English. I trace a particular trajectory, which begins with the writing of Solomon Plaatje and extends to the writers for Drum magazine in the 1950s. I conceptualise this trajectory within South African literary history as evidence not only of cultural resistance, but also of cultural transformation and ownership.

I suggest that the post-colonial notion of hybridity, contingent as it is, is a useful framework within which to place this operation of culture. I demonstrate one way in

which hybridity, as a theory which seeks to describe the operation of culture, needs to be carefully nuanced (in this case particularly by concerns of class and gender) in order to usefully describe a cultural condition produced by material histories of inequality.

I go on to address liberalism as a political philosophy in South Africa. A particular manifestation of liberalism plays an important role in the establishment of a contrasting South African use of Shakespeare. A "white liberal" Shakespeare flourished with the establishment of the "Shakespearean" theatre, Maynardville. By making use of emblematic discursive moments in Maynardville's history, I discuss the way in which Shakespeare was used as part of a construction of "European culture" in apartheid South Africa. Drum's Sophiatown and Maynardville are thus contrasted as two different South African Shakespearean spaces.

At the same time, I seek ultimately to demonstrate that apparently oppositional stances (within English literary studies, and within different South African uses of Shakespeare) may not be as different as they seem. I point to the commodification of a New South Africanness which relies on humanism, on liberalism, and on opposition to apartheid practices. In its discursive strategies, and in the cultural and commercial tools available today, this New South Africanness unites the strands which comprise the development of South African Shakespeare mapped in this thesis. Finally, I hope to demonstrate that a South African Shakespeare which has grown out of the complex material and literary history discussed here, is being used to help build a particular kind of "new South African" culture, post-apartheid.

Contents

Resistance… need not *necessarily* mean rejection of dominant culture, the utter refusal to countenance any engagement with its forms and discourses. Indeed, not only is such isolation impossible but the most effective post-colonial resistance has always been the wresting, from imperial hands, of some measure of political control over such things as language, writing and various kinds of cultural discourse

Bill Ashcroft, Post-Colonial Transformation (2001: 47).

And in my contacts with them, the Europeans had made it clear that they were the overlords, that the earth and all its wealth belonged to them… And I had submitted to their superior strength. But submission can be a subtle thing. A man can submit today in order to resist tomorrow

Peter Abrahams, Tell Freedom (1954: 310).

[T]he Native in his primitive or isolated state… has been little or not at all influenced by contact with white civilisation, and… he has not, therefore, become a problem to the European in the same sense in which the less romantic but much more troublesome educated or semi-educated Native is a problem. It is from the Native in contact with the European that the Native problem arises

C.T. Loram, The Claims of the Native Question Upon Scientists. South African Association for the Advancement of Science, Presidential Address, 13 July 1921 (Qtd. Rich, 1984: 55).

Page from an unpublished Plaatje notebook:
With apologies to Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice"
Hath not a Mochuana eyes?
Hath he not hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions??
Is not a Mochuana fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter, as a whiteman is??
If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest we will resemble you in that
(Qtd. Couzens & Willan, 1976: 7).

Chapter 1: Introduction
Shakespeare and the Essentially Human

> Western societies do not embody the democratic values they proclaim (Blackburn, 1989: x).

> Political positions are not simply identifiable as progressive or reactionary, bourgeois or radical... outside the terms and conditions of their discursive address (Bhabha, 1994: 22).

This thesis will trace frameworks for specific uses of Shakespeare in South Africa. Such uses contribute to the construction of a figure I call South African Shakespeare. I hope to weigh the South African component in the development of the uses of Shakespeare I explore. There are a number of reasons for the need to weigh this discussion, not least the cultural currency which accrues to the construct "Shakespeare", as emblematic of Literature, and as the figurehead of a worldwide academic and cultural industry. In the context of post-colonial theory, which informs this enquiry, there is an imperative to re-inscribe the cultural realities of the colonised, viewing them not as secondary and responsive, but as primary and creative in their own right.

The choice to avoid discussion of the aesthetic merits of what have come to signify "Shakespeare's texts" is not to deny the literary merit of these texts. However, aesthetics are not my concern here. Rather, I seek to explore the ways in which an emblematic "Shakespeare" was used in South African literature and literary theory, to trace how this construct impacts on the development of a radical literary theory, and of literature in English, in South Africa.

I undertake this work with an awareness of English literary studies' relation to colonialism. This history has implications for English as a language in general in South Africa, and the study of English literature in African universities. In the context of wider debates about the colonially-implicated development of English literary studies, and in the context of the proliferation of politically aware cultural studies, an important preliminary question becomes, as Stanley Fish asks, what political efficacy can we

reasonably expect from literary theory (1995)? Furthermore, how do we address the question of Shakespeare's "relevance" to South Africa? These questions are explored in chapter two. Accounting for Shakespeare's use in South African literary history is one way of addressing these issues. Shakespeare's presence in South Africa's literary history is inextricable from Shakespeare's presence in South African education practices, albeit in ways that are more complex than some South African Shakespeare criticism has to date allowed.

In chapter three I overview the tradition of what I denote radical Shakespearean scholarship, which tries to reclaim Shakespeare from the oppressive nationalist-colonial history sketched in the second chapter. Radical South African Shakespearean criticism initially located itself within this Anglo-American tradition, and I investigate the theoretical implications of this debt for South African criticism. Crucial to this discussion is the role of liberal humanism as Public Enemy Number One for radical Shakespearean criticism.

This introductory chapter explores the objections against the kind of humanism that has been used by English literary studies. Liberalism as a philosophy is addressed in chapter six, which goes on to address a manifestation of liberalism in one South African use of Shakespeare. Although radical scholarship tends to use the label "liberal-humanism" as representative of a political and ethical framework against which it objects, I wish to make the point that liberalism and humanism, although related, are different frameworks. As such each philosophy has its own South African history.

I seek to demonstrate that the anti-humanist theoretic of radical scholarship in its Anglo-American form relies in some crucial ways on the humanism it disavows. A major strand of my argument here is that apparently oppositional stances – radical scholarship, and humanist-inflected literary scholarship; a transformative South African use of Shakespeare in the service of opposition to racist colonial practices and to apartheid, and the ways Shakespeare informs notions of culture for white English speaking South

African "liberals" – are not as different as they may seem. One important unifying force across these apparently very different modes of thought and practice is class.

"Class" is a difficult category in the history of South Africa. It has a complicated, and ongoing, relationship with race. According to Posel et al., liberal opposition to apartheid initially coalesced around a critique of Afrikaner nationalism, and not around the economic inequities which apartheid developed and entrenched (reasons are suggested in chapter six, where the bourgeois nature of liberalism - which benefitted from the economic and territorial implications of apartheid - is explored). The Marxist rejection of this liberal approach emphasised "the relationship between apartheid and capitalism", and concentrated on " 'class' in making sense of apartheid's origin, character and future... [An] instrumentalist treatment of apartheid's race policies as a tool of class interests" thus characterised much South African Marxist scholarship. This emphasis helped to deflect attention away from the social performance of race as a category (Posel, Hyslop & Nieftagodien, 2001: iii; v). I am concerned in this thesis with writing in English which is linked to the development of what can be called a class fraction of petit-bourgeois black men (although not without qualification, as I discuss in chapter four).[1] Liberalism plays a role in the development of this class fraction, and therefore in the cultural transactions currently being endorsed by the ruling elite in post-apartheid South Africa. Ultimately, liberalism as a political philosophy, and humanist logic as it applies to Shakespeare's "universality", both inform the uses of Shakespeare in South Africa: in the development of writing in English in the twentieth century, and in the performance of "South African culture" in the present. This is addressed in chapter six.

In addition, I make the point that humanism, although in many ways problematically invoked and enacted by English literary studies, has other applications in South African history and in the development of writing in English in South Africa. Humanism cannot easily be rejected in South Africa.

[1] The ongoing difficulty of racial nomenclature in the South African context has been much discussed (Posel, 2001a; Posel, 2001b; Maré, 2001). Here I mean the designation "black" to include "coloured".

I am concerned in the second half of the thesis to draw out a South African Shakespeare whose identity relies on theories of cultural interaction and cultural transformation, as both political and personal resistance. I seek to privilege a South African experience (defined specifically according to class, race, and gender) and emphasise its ownership of the Shakespeare with which it engaged.

In chapter four, I explore the use that Solomon Plaatje made of Shakespeare. Plaatje's use of Shakespeare relies on a material access to education practices, and a concomitant personal relationship with English literature, that are linked to humanist mission schooling practices, and to class aspiration. The construction of the South African writer as a young man in this period is addressed through a reading of Peter Abrahams' Tell Freedom.

The notions of hybridity, of writing back, of challenging and breaking Manichean binaries which will always disadvantage Africa, are crucial tools in understanding how Shakespeare might have developed a South African face. I explore South African literary history as a model of cultural transformation. By conceptualising a trajectory within South African literary history as evidence not only of cultural resistance, but also as cultural ownership, I hope to illustrate that culture is an organism. It cannot be reduced to a thing, bounded, controlled, policed. This understanding of culture resists South Africa's apartheid history, and refuses to endorse the possibility of separate development. As such, I hope that this understanding of culture in South Africa will contribute towards the development of a sense of what can constitute "South Africa" post-apartheid.

Kelwyn Sole warns against the commodification of difference and of democracy in the "new" South Africa. He points to the ongoing "socio-economic exploitation, structural violence and *de facto* exclusions" that operate in South Africa, despite the new constitution's entrenchment of a range of rights. Sole rejects the idea that "a general belief in Enlightenment notions such as 'liberty', 'justice' and 'equality' can be recuperated and articulated by the colonial subject afresh in post-colonial contexts". He

thus warns against valorising "a local version of African nationalism" which "discerns in South Africa... a history of transculturated, agglomerated and hybrid identities" (1997: 134-5). I agree with Sole's suspicion of an easy invocation of hybridity, which overlooks ongoing inequities and which can be harnessed to a nationalist agenda of being, and buying, "proudly South African". In chapter five I suggest that it may be necessary to redefine hybridity. Once we have taken cognisance of the central role of class in the notion of hybridity, it might be a useful concept to describe a component of South African writing in English.

In chapter five I continue to trace the tradition of a particular kind of South African Shakespeare, into some of the writing of the 1950s. I examine the link between a textually inscribed class identity, English literary education, and Shakespeare, in autobiographies of the decade and in the writings of and about Drum magazine. The 1950s were also the decade when the apartheid that was increasingly gestured towards throughout the first half of the twentieth century, as Plaatje's struggles make so clear, was formalised into the *de jure* policies of the Nationalist state.

While the 50s mark a clear use of Shakespeare as part of a South African tradition of writing in English, it is also the time when another kind of South African Shakespeare was born. A "liberal" Shakespeare flourished with the establishment of the Shakespearean Open Air theatre, Maynardville. Chapter six offers a snapshot derived from some of the discourses used to describe the establishment of Maynardville in 1955, as Drum's home, Sophiatown, was being slowly dismantled. I discuss the way in which Shakespeare was used as part of a construction of "European culture" in apartheid South Africa, as can be seen by the representations in English newspapers of the staging of Welcome Msomi's uMabatha at Maynardville in 1974. Sophiatown and Maynardville are thus contrasted as two different South African Shakespearean spaces.

In chapter six I also explore how Msomi's career has developed, with the more recent stagings of uMabatha in South Africa, America, and Britain. I point to the

commodification of a New South Africanness which relies on humanism, on liberalism, and on opposition to apartheid practices. In its discursive strategies, and in the cultural and commercial tools available today, this new South Africanness unites the strands which comprise the development of South African Shakespeare mapped in this thesis.

I do not endorse the opposition of "European" and "African" cultures, two monolithic binaries which are separate and opposed. While I do not want to endorse unproblematically a humanist notion of universal culture, I believe we should take seriously Said's assertion that "Beethoven belongs as much to West Indians as he does to Germans, since his music is now part of the human heritage" (1993: xxv). I take this to mean that culture is responsive and mutable. One of the effects of nineteenth-century colonialism was to make cultures available to each other, albeit unequally. Another effect was the development of English literary study as what amounted to a cultural-political tool. This is a view of the relationship between culture and politics that not only insists that culture is political, and that cultural and other discourses have an effect on material conditions, but which also views the use of Shakespeare within these historical and conceptual structures as something other than a neutral carrier of human values.

At heart, then, this thesis does not want to escape its reliance on a critical tradition which makes use of an instrumentalist approach to reading Shakespeare. This is not to suggest that there is no possible other way to read Shakespeare. Personal relationships and journeys can be facilitated by access to the writings of others - literature, philosophy, journalism, as well as other kinds of texts, not all of them written or even verbal. But my own need to locate this investigation within the realm of the political, together with my scepticism of humanist discourses, not least for feminist objections which are not adequately addressed by the anti-apartheid struggle's use of the concept of "human rights", mean that I have steered clear of attempts to chart personal journeys. However, I do refer to a class-based analysis of education on textually-constructed personal identity in chapters four and five.

I am aware that this project runs the risk of pleasing neither of the two broad camps of South African Shakespeareans - the liberal humanists and the radical scholars. I hope, in my criticisms of both, to be suggesting a third way. This alternative would be informed by the politics of a tradition of radical scholarship, which counters a universalising tendency in a brand of humanism to overlook determining factors of identity and experience, and to refuse to acknowledge the complex relationship between politics and cultural forms, between material conditions and the condition of reading. At the same time, I wish to avoid the stridency of the radical discourses that have been produced in South Africa, whose oppositional energy inflects the work with an informing principle of anti-ism. Such work often contains politically motivated moral attacks on what is crudely perceived as a homogenous South African Shakespearean system which in reality is a far more complex series of systems. This project is possible now because of my at least nominally post-apartheid historical placement. The totalising evil of the apartheid state structure no longer exists as a monolith against which all efforts have legitimately to be directed.

I hope to be able to describe a South African ownership of Shakespeare-as-a-series-of-texts and as a symbol of education, while remaining aware of the brutalities of historical impositions which led to the imperative of ownership in the first place, and of how these historical processes continue in the present. There is a fundamental problem implicit in talking about alternative ways of talking about Shakespeare, in the context of the history of English in South Africa. This is the problem of how to make space for conceptualisation and discussion without taking space from South African cultural endeavours in the name of what ultimately cannot help but be a global Shakespeare whose status is built upon colonial practices. It is the problem of speaking a South African Shakespeare without speaking *over* the South African half of the equation, or *for* South African writers whose complicated personal processes and extremely vexed historical circumstances forced them to come to terms with a world order they were not involved in initiating.

Why Shakespeare?

Textual critics such as Margreta de Grazia, Peter Stallybrass, Random Cloud, and Stephen Orgel have argued convincingly that the Shakespeare corpus as it has developed through history is in part a construction of successive editors. "Shakespeare", a collection of texts which embodies the best of English literature (immortal words set down in careful order by an immaculate genius), developed through history, and is constituted by, as well as implicated in, material and ideological conditions. Thus the Shakespeare corpus is a body of works that has gathered to itself textual stability as it has accrued social meaning and critical interpretations.

In their material history (an increasing, increasingly constructed, textual stability; accumulation of exegesis; and accreted cultural value), then, Shakespeare's texts can be characterised as a collection of Western ideals, communal texts. This is perhaps one reason why the works are so porous, capable of accommodating such a wide range of readings. Another reason might be located in the rhetorical nature of Elizabethan writing, which allows for ambiguity and concomitant linguistic play, part of what Stephen Orgel has called "that complexity of sensibility which is what we have come to value most in Shakespearean drama, and in Renaissance culture as a whole" (1998: 11). A third explanation for Shakespeare's longevity might be found in the cultural processes of colonialism, which, with the help of a politically-motivated education system, constructed a "universal" Shakespeare whose themes were imported to supplant those of other cultures.

This universal Shakespeare owes its philosophical underpinnings in part to what Catherine Belsey calls "the consensual orthodoxy of the west" in which "the human subject, the self, is the central figure": humanism (1985: x). Humanism as a system of thinking has a longer and rather more complex history than many recent radical Shakespearean scholars allow (Todorov, 2002). Nevertheless, English literary studies, of which Shakespeare scholarship is a lynchpin, are underpinned by both colonialism and by

a particular tradition of humanism. It is against these formulating loci, with their concomitant ideologies, that a number of related strands of critical practices developed in the latter half of the twentieth century. This development took place within the context of what can be classed as the post-modern systems of thought, including structuralism, post-structuralism, and post-colonialism. For the groups of Anglo-American critics whom Janet MacArthur calls the practitioners of "revisionist criticism" (1989: 71) and what I will refer to as "radical criticism", the moral hypocrisy of this humanism is philosophically and politically problematic, and the underlying theoretical contradictions untenable. For South African proponents of a Shakespeare criticism influenced by this politically radical, anti-humanist Anglo-American tradition, the hypocrisy of English liberalism, in the context of white English-speaking South Africa during apartheid, is the necessary target of critical and moral interrogation.

This thesis seeks to examine this tradition of radical Shakespeare scholarship, which takes cognisance of Shakespeare's *use* within a world system of literary education that is implicated in colonial history. I call this kind of Shakespearean criticism radical because of its leftist political impetus, and its often oppositional tone. Incorporating new historicism, cultural materialism, some feminisms, as well as developments in post-colonial theories, this tradition:

> has helped us to understand the complex ways in which Shakespeare's writing was entangled from the beginning with the projects of nation-building, Empire and colonization; and by its uncovering of the processes through which Shakespeare was simultaneously invented as the "National Bard" and promoted as a repository of "universal" human value, it has shown how the canon became an instrument of imperial authority as important and as powerful in its way as the Bible and the gun (Neill, 1998: 168-9).

I examine the theoretical logic of this Anglo-American development in Shakespeare studies, in order to explicate its usefulness to South Africa. It is not unexpected that there should be complications; caution in transposing these radical theories onto "post-colonial contexts" is noted by Neill, and is not a new idea to post-colonial theory. Nevertheless,

radical South African Shakespearean scholarship has been vocal in its debt to this Anglo-American tradition.

The expression of the task in terms of "usefulness" points to an instrumentalist utilisation of Shakespeare that informs both the Anglo-American radical tradition, and the starting point for this thesis. My founding concern is: can Shakespeare be to South Africa anything other than an imposed, elevated notion of Literature, characterised as primarily English, never African? Can the liberal humanist values which saturate the tradition of Shakespearean literary criticism be viewed in any light other than that presented by radical Shakespeare scholarship, which views "Shakespeare" with suspicion, as a result of "his" national and colonial history? Following the trajectory of post-colonial theories of cultural transformation-as-resistance, can there be a South African Shakespeare?

Below I review the objections against a particular kind of humanism which have been raised by recent English literary scholars working in the field of early modern and Renaissance studies. I point to the possibilities for hypocrisy inherent in this practice of humanism, before going on to point to the potential for other uses to which the theory of humanism can be put. I hope ultimately to suggest first, that humanism in South Africa was a necessary part of the struggle against oppression, both politically and via the development of writing in English in South Africa; and second, that radical criticism may not be as logically different from humanism as it would like to think. To reject humanism wholesale is not only to throw the baby out with the bathwater; it is also to run the risk of reinscribing the hypocrisy of which humanism itself is so often accused.

Liberal, Essentialist, Aesthetic Humanism

Liberal humanism is the bogey of politically committed radical Shakespeare scholarship, both in South African and in Anglo-American criticism, sometimes verging on what Terry Eagleton calls, in a different context, " 'straw-targeting' " (1996: viii). Liberal humanism is liberal because of the notion of the autonomous subject it assumes and relies

upon, and humanist because of the quality or attribute it posits of an essential, universal "humanness" shared by all subjects. Kate Soper offers a definition of humanism:

> [humanism] appeals (positively) to the notion of a core humanity or common essential features in terms of which human beings can be defined and understood, thus (negatively) to concepts ("alienation", "inauthenticity", "reification", etc.) designating, and intended to explain, the perversion or "loss" of this common being. Humanism takes history to be a product of human thought and action, and thus claims that the categories of "consciousness", "agency", "choice", "responsibility", "moral value" etc. are indispensible to its understanding (1986: 11-2).

Underlying humanism is thus a belief in the "concept of the human subject", which is rejected by what Soper designated as "anti-humanism" (1986:12). Tzvetan Todorov offers a history of the development of French humanism (he says the term "humanist" was first coined by Montaigne [2002: 6]) which presents the philosophy as the mode of thought best able to bridge the divide between the medieval subject, bound by the laws of God and of tradition, and Modern Man (sic), who grapples with his freedom from absolute religious or moral laws. For Todorov, the version of humanism rejected by "anti-humanism" is one of the "watered down secondary school versions [of humanism] to which we have become accustomed". Such simplified understandings of humanism ignore the "vigour of thought" of its sixteenth- to nineteenth- century forms (231). Members of "The Humanist Family", far from relying on a simplistic concept of the human subject, "deny any necessary relationship between, on the one hand, the acquisition of the right to self-government and, on the other, the dissolution of society, morality, or the subject" (29). As such, for Todorov humanism is the intellectual mode best able to address the crisis of the split or deferred subject which is an informing condition of modernity. Such a suggestion at least points to the textured history of humanism, complicating any easy sense of what might constitute its fundamental nature. Nevertheless, there is a particular invocation and enactment of humanism in English literary criticism against which radical critics object.

MacArthur summarises the fundamental conceptual split between humanism and the systems of thought underlying "revisionist criticism":

> For many postmodernists, the human subject is defined within language rather than informed with a pregiven essence or presence which makes him unique, autonomous, and self-sufficient. The belief in identity – outside of textuality – is viewed as a nostalgic mystique of presence which masks the role of language in Western philosophies and in the construction of reality (1989: 73).

The problematic assumption of a subjectivity which exists outside of language; the yearning for a lost plenitude; and the related conservative modernist nostalgia for a more ordered past which is equally unreclaimable, are some of the points of contention that radical criticism has with the use of what it denotes as liberal humanism within traditional English literary studies.

Jonathan Dollimore selects for analysis the pious tone of this humanism, which he says relies on a tragic notion of human dignity in an unjust universe. He calls this system of thought "essentialist humanism", and links the transcendentally human concerns of the second half of the term to an essentialism which neither this humanism nor Christian providentialism can escape. According to the logic of this essentialism, says Dollimore, Man's redemption is in his own hands, not in God's, and his intrinsic dignity is found in his noble suffering (1989: 189).[2] Todorov identifies "perversions" of humanism: "prideful" humanism and "naïve" humanism. The former assumes that "man is omnipotent"; the latter that "man is intrinsically good" (2002: 36 - 8). According to Dollimore, despite the centring of Man and the dislocation of God, this (prideful and naïve) humanism contains residual traces of the Christianity to which it offers an alternative.[3] Both betray a "preoccupation with the universal counterpart of essentialist subjectivity" (1989: 190). Furthermore, both mystify suffering; the one as part of God's plan, the other as a way for man to effect self-redemption (194). Transcendence becomes

[2] In all cases in this thesis, when the nouns "man" and "Man" and the pronouns "his" and "him" appear, they do so specifically and deliberately. In the context of this discussion of the humanist subject, I wish to indicate that the humanist subject is silently and intrinsically gendered male (even Todorov's overview of European humanism demonstrates, by its universalising pronouns when they occur, as much as by the discussions of the works of the exclusively male figures who belong to this "intellectual family", that the humanist subject is male [2002]. The book's cover depicts an older white man's head, made up of a montage of vegetation from the "Imperfect Garden" which is the human [sic] condition, and which humanism, itself an "imperfect garden", can best tackle). This is addressed in more detail later in this chapter.

the shared "essentialist conception of what it is to be human" (194).[4] Ultimately, the universal and the notion of human essence are mutually dependent counterparts in this schema (253). Essentialist humanism is thus quasi-religious; it affirms and mystifies suffering and removes historically determined causes of oppression, and the possibility for change of material conditions (194). For Dollimore it is both the essentialism and the stress on transcendence that are problematic – for both encode a conservative politics.

Dollimore differentiates between the anti-humanist, and the "anti-humanitarian and anti-democratic" (253), a distinction which is important for my concern with the possibilities for humanism in South Africa. He reconfigures the humanist/ anti-humanist dialectic as the differences between idealist and materialist conceptions of subjectivity. And an alternative understanding of the constitution and definition of subjectivity is vital to Dollimore's anti-humanism, since subjectivity is a central issue to "English studies as it has been historically constituted" (249). What Dollimore conceives of as essentialist humanism in English studies is also presented by MacArthur as underlying the development of English literary studies. In her overview, the late Victorian/ early twentieth-century moment in which English literature began as a subject incorporated what she denotes romantic-essentialist as well as modernist elements (1989), resulting in the use of a specific notion of humanism in English studies against which Dollimore is objecting.

MacArthur provides an account of how a humanist Shakespeare was developed and used from the Romantics to the Modernists, resulting in the construction of a "universal" Shakespeare who is above "the nightmare of history" (1989: 21). She details the alienation and despair which produce a modernist twentieth-century "aesthetic humanism" (38-9), and demonstrates how Shakespeare comes to represent the pinnacle of

[3] For Catherine Belsey, too, the subject of humanism takes the place of God (1985: 74).
[4] "Redemption and Endurance" are the "two sides of essentialist humanism" (191), which Dollimore further divides into "ethical humanism" (concerned with "essential humanity, the universal human condition") and "existential humanism" ("essential heroism and existential integrity") (193). Soper comments on the atheistic quality of modern humanism and points to the zealous character of humanist atheism (Humanism and Anti-Humanism, 13).

this in poetry (33-7). Aesthetic humanism, as it is used in English literary studies, has specific characteristics. The "uncoerced self" is one crucial element of this formulation (39, following Frank Lentricchia). MacArthur further describes the

> conservative literary-critical tradition of aesthetic humanism, with its emphasis on authority of the text, the author, or the reader; on the transcendent aesthetic realm; and on the organic monuments of literary art (46).

It is also socially conservative (53) and both requires and constructs order (51).

Dollimore is specific about the uses to which such a humanism has been put, in the name of what Literature has been made to stand for: "Essentialist theories of human nature, though not intrinsically racist, have contributed powerfully to the ideological conditions which made racism possible." He illustrates how apparently different philosophical understandings of the essentially human result in equally racist conclusions, using the prescriptive logic of the universally human (1989: 256). Furthermore, echoing MacArthur's point about the use of such a humanism, Dollimore stresses the ways in which this notion of human essence can be used for authoritarian purposes (1989: 257). "The crucial point", he concludes, "is surely this":

> Essentialism, rooted as it is in the concept of centered structure and determining origin, constitutes a residual metaphysic within secularist thought which, though it has not entailed has certainly made possible the classic ideological effect: a specific cultural identity is universalized or naturalized; more specifically, in reaction to social change this residual metaphysic is activated in defense of one cultural formation, one conception of what it is to be truly human, to the corresponding exclusion of others (258).

He goes on to illustrate how this tradition of the hypocritically humanist (because apparently relying on notions of the universal, of a shared human essence, but invoking the racist and exclusionary logic he has outlined above) is manifested in the founding moments of literary criticism, and how Shakespeare's early hagiographer-critics, from Pope to Coleridge to Bradley, constructed Shakespeare as the embodiment of the universal.

Ultimately, Dollimore concludes that the notion of "essential humanity" which he finds underlying the philosophy of essentialist humanism as he has sketched it, encodes a fear of "difference and otherness... democracy and change" (267). Instead, he wants a way of discussing "not essence but potential, not the human condition but cultural difference, not destiny but collectively identified goals" (271). The political objections to a particular, European history of thought and action are clear, as is Dollimore's own political agenda, an agenda to which he has remained largely committed.[5] For Dollimore, the anti-humanist objective is "the decentering of man" (249). However, his desire for political emancipation, and belief in the need for human justice, themselves rely on a valorisation of humanity:[6] beneath the demand for a more equitable system lies a universal human subject which, by virtue of its humanity, is entitled to political and social justice. Soper points to the danger of combining politics and philosophy without due attention to methodological process: "We must be wary, in fact, lest by focusing on the philosophical 'end of man' we encourage a passivity that may hasten the actual demise of humanity" (1986: 153).

Catherine Belsey, another major anti-humanist literary critical theorist, makes use of medieval and Renaissance drama to explore and critique a specific historical construction of the human subject, and literature's relationship to the expression of this subject. Belsey also finds that the construction of this figure - the universal human subject - relies on the notion of an unchanging human essence, which is fundamentally conservative. Belsey's contention is: "The subject is not the origin of meanings, not even the meaning of subjectivity itself." The reason literature is such an important discursive field within the historical process of tracing the emergent modern subject is because fiction is involved in the construction of subjectivity (4), in "both defin[ing] subjectivity and address[ing] the subject" (x). In thus attributing to literature the power to impact on the formation of subjectivity, Belsey valorises language in a way not dissimilar to humanism's valorisation of the essential subject.

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[5] For an example of his more recent attention to this point, see his essay in Post-colonial Shakespeares (Loomba & Orkin, 1998).

[6] I am indebted to David Schalkwyk for pointing this out to me.

Belsey agrees with Dollimore's objections to the politically conservative use that can be made of the notion of the essentially human. She points to the class interests encoded in what she denotes as liberal humanism's claims to be "both natural and universal", but which were "produced in the interests of the bourgeois class which came to power in the second half of the seventeenth century" (7). Indeed, Belsey goes so far as to date the birth of liberal humanism to the English revolution, "the moment when the bourgeoisie is installed as the ruling class" (33-4); "Liberal humanism, conceived as autonomy for the subject and as control by the social body, but also as violence... [was] born in 1649" (125). And it is this tension between apparent autonomy, and the discursive and actual violence which polices it, that Belsey locates as one of the sites of contradiction in liberal humanism.

The presence of one or more fundamental contradictions becomes a major faultline within liberal humanism for many of its critics. According to Belsey, while both "liberal" and "humanism" are plural terms, they also denote a "contradictory phenomenon":

> While it is true that major reforms have been made in its name, it also provides the framework for a market economy, defended by a powerful police force, and a naturalization of inequality both in the state and in the family which is profoundly authoritarian.

It thus "is often neither liberal nor humanist" (8). The apparent "commitment to *man*, whose essence is *freedom*" (8) has in fact been hypocritical, conservative and authoritarian in practice. Western liberal democracy is the political form of this philosophical idea: "patriarchal, militaristic, and predicated on economic competition and conflict" (14).

Patriarchy's centrality to this notion of the essentially human is a point Belsey insists upon and illustrates throughout the course of her book:[7] this notion of the human subject is silently gendered male (ix; 9). The "inequality of freedom" between the genders is another "one of the[...] contradictions" of liberal humanism (9). Todorov's discussion of

[7] I use the term "patriarchy" in its widest sense, to denote interlinking systems of thought which endorse the Rule of the Father. The identity politics invoked by humanist criticism do not have to be enunciated by a male critic in order to be patriarchal.

humanism's ability to address the malaise of Modern Man's lost subjectivity itself illustrates the gendering of humanism's human subject. Todorov's translator at times uses "he/ she", and at times the female pronoun to illustrate a general case. It is thus even more noticable that in Todorov's discussions of humanism's subject, the pronoun used is "he". Todorov contends that humanism informs modern democratic society, as will be discussed below. At the same time, his overview of the philosophical conditions which made the French and American revolutions possible fails to recognise the fact that modern democracy meant, initially and until relatively recently, votes for men.

Belsey points to liberal humanism's tendency to extricate the literary from the political, "locat[ing] drama either above the level of politics (as art) or below it (as mere entertainment)" (7). This complaint, that a humanist tradition of literary criticism has been used to divorce art from politics, is repeated by many radical Shakespearean literary critics. Most detailed criticism of this separation of art and politics is directed at the turn-of-the-century and the early twentienth century's British proponents of an Arnoldian sense of Culture (Hawkes, 1986). For Belsey, this apparently apolitical, actually authoritarian and conservative, silently male, bourgeois ideology - liberal humanism – "denote[s] the ruling assumptions, values and meanings of the modern epoch" (7). There is indeed, in such a picture, much against which to object, and the energy and frustrations of the anti-humanist Anglo-American radical critics are understandable in this light.

Like Dollimore, Belsey acknowledges that humanism as a philosophy shifts and develops, is not monolithic. The different monikers they use point to this - Dollimore's essentialist humanism describes different elements of humanism from Belsey's liberal humanism. Soper also points to differences in inflection across humanism, when she discusses what she calls a modern " 'technical fix' humanism". She contrasts this modern humanism to Renaissance humanism, which saw "man as a 'free and sovereign artificer' determining his 'own nature without constraint from any barrier' "; and to "the eighteenth-century 'Enlightenment' humanists" (1986: 14).[8] She also sketches the

[8] Soper quotes Pico della Mirandola (1463-94) for her definition of Renaissance humanism (22). She also

parameters of a nineteenth-century " 'romantic' " humanism, a positivist "post-war British humanism" (16), and a "Marxist humanism" (20).

But Belsey insists that there are identifiable "woods as well as trees" (1985: 7). Soper confirms

> a profound confidence in our powers to come to know and thereby to control our environment and destiny lies at the heart of every humanism; in this sense, we must acknowledge a continuity of theme (1986: 14).

Like Dollimore, too, Belsey sketches how humanism is used in English literary study. She asserts that humanism speaks to an eternally unfillable, unspeakable gap in the human subject, which it also produces (48-52). For Belsey this is its most inescapable contradiction. "Literary criticism is thus a choric elegy for lost presence" (53). Belsey's terms of analysis are an example of MacArthur's account of the effect of "structuralist and post-structuralist theories of language" on literary criticism's notion of subjectivity, with its concomitantly deconstructive effect on "Western humanism": "identity or the truth about the self is endlessly deferred by language", with subjects engaged in "a perpetual attempt to find a 'presence' that language promises but can never deliver" (MacArthur, 1989: 73).

For Belsey, the liberal humanism which underlies traditional literary criticism not only seeks to redress this rupture at the core of meaning, the essential hollowness of language itself.[9] It also locates interpretative authority in the literary critic. Just as humanist criticism "is a way of controlling knowledge", of seeking the single meaning encoded in the literary text, so it requires "a certain expertise, a finesse of judgement not given to all readers, because the meaning in question is neither in the text nor produced by the text

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points to the complexity of trying to categorise "humanism" and "anti-humanism" as wholly and only opposite in theoretical and methodological intention (16-8).

[9] "Humanist criticism is predicated on the subject's inability to express the meaning of which the subject is nonetheless the origin. Treating all texts as utterances, it undertakes to redouble them with another meaning, what the author really meant, what we as readers are meant to understand. The point is to remedy the author's inevitable failure. The quarry is the enunciating subject itself, source of the meaning only shadowed in the text" (Belsey, 1985: 52-3).

but is always elsewhere" (53). In this case the critic becomes the privileged consciousness, he who is able to claim the status of enunciating subject. And again, it is this concern with both chasing and mourning the ever-elusive subject, as well as the tone in which this is done (which locates the inadequate present in a particular relation to the lost idealised past), which has directly political implications:

> [T]he subject of liberal humanism is a chimera, an effect of language, not its origin. Meanwhile, the social and political are placed as secondary concerns.... In the subject's hopeless pursuit of self-presence politics can safely be left to take care of itself. And we can be sure that the institutions in question will in consequence stay much as they are (54).

In this formulation it is again easy to see why radical critics would take umbrage with a mode of criticism that claims the moral high ground through its construction of a common, universal human essence which, when considered, is the reflection of the white Anglo-American patriarchal critic. It is also not difficult to see the moral and philosophical stakes in apartheid South Africa, in a criticism that replicates this logic in the context of such obvious and sustained inequality. Indeed, it is one of Martin Orkin's main concerns in Shakespeare Against Apartheid to reveal the ways in which Shakespeare has been mis-used, through being mis-read, to prop up the apartheid status quo. As will be seen, however, Orkin's criticism in its fundamental need to locate *the* meaning in Shakespeare, to replace an incorrect reading with a correct, emancipatory one, replicates the humanist logic it seeks to displace and critique. Humanism has proven more difficult to dislodge from English literary studies than it would seem from the anti-humanist critiques mentioned above.

MacArthur's overview of twentieth-century Renaissance literary criticism, which charts "how the changing notions of man and the human" affect literary critical thinking (1989: 11), highlights the lines of thought that connect and continue through literary criticism, even within ostensibly oppositional modes of thought. So, for example, there are clear connections, in some shared assumptions, that run through, as she plots it, romanticism, modernism and new criticism, formalism, and reader-response theory. Even though she marks a "linguistic shift" (106) between modernism and post-modernism, the latter of which encompasses new historicism, cultural materialism, and feminism, these later

movements or structures of thought also owe a debt to the scholarship they seek to overturn or reject. This debt is most obvious, she says, in feminism, whose "concern with a male/female dialectic, or a discourse of sexual difference, in literature has played a large part in historicising 'Man' and revoking his claim to universal human essence and spirit" (92). This concern, MacArthur points out, ultimately still depends on a reliance on the individual human subject.

Equally, however,

> like the aesthetic humanists [her moniker for the literary critics against whose apolitical sense of High Culture and use of liberal humanism the later generation of radical critics object], the new historicists apparently have their own nightmare of history which bears on their interpretation of the past (90).

Following Jonathan Crewe, MacArthur suggests that the crisis of power-in-action located by so many new historicist critics is an allegory of 1980s academia; or that the concerns of this criticism might constitute its own "postmodern elegy for the lost self" (91). She ultimately concludes:

> [N]o literary interpretation, history, or theory escapes nostalgia for everyone is the subject of his own history... Rather than create feelings of doubt or futility, however, this should challenge literary critics to accept the presence not only of themselves, but also of earlier moments of literary theory, in the past and in reconstructing individualism. This leads me to offer for consideration the prediction that a genuine humanism will necessarily be founded on nostalgia (110).

Nostalgia is one of the informing affects of humanism for which it is criticised, because this humanism's nostalgia encodes a politically conservative yearning for an ordered society structured along recognisable and inviolable class lines. This vision of an organically structured society echoes the yearning for the unfractured pre-modernist self, and may account for the centrality of the early modern period, as depicted in Tillyard's The Elizabethan World Picture, to the scholarship produced from this kind of humanist imperative. Tillyard's Elizabethan England is still rooted in its inherited "world picture... of an ordered universe arranged in a fixed system of hierarchies but modified by man's

sin and the hope of his redemption"; "The greatness of the Elizabethan age was that it contained so much of the new without bursting the noble form of the old order" (1972 [1943]: 13; 16). His book begins with a discussion of "Renaissance humanism"(11). The conservative, nostalgic elements of Tillyard's vision have been discussed by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, who respectively point to the construction of "a metaphysic of order" (Dollimore, 1985: 5); and of:

> a Shakespeare who is fundamentally confident about the hierarchical view of the universe and about the political order which that seems to legitimate... conservative[,]... predicated on the ideas of an essential human nature and the desirability of 'order' and... hostile to positive political action (Sinfield, 1985: 131).

Michael Bristol finds a "hermeneutics of reconstitution" behind the presence of liberal humanism in literary studies, which functions as a "strategy to keep faith with tradition" (1990: 16). It is thus always backwards-looking, and is informed by a suspicion of the fractured, unstable present. The "background consensus" of liberal humanism, says Bristol,

> defines scholarship as a disinterested love for the various products of literary tradition and for the institutionalization of that love in a substantive educational curriculum consisting of great works (16-7).

Liberal humanism, in this context, relies on a sense of itself as ideologically neutral, and on a canon of texts disseminated within an education system (Evans, 1989: 9). According to Bristol, humanism both assumes and relies upon the existence of an essential, indivisable, complete text, which expresses, in this case, Shakespeare's "absolute cultural authority over that of his interpreters". Thus this humanism is primarily concerned to develop "a submissive empathy with the transcendent source of aesthetic experience".

Implicit in this activity is a willingness to submit oneself to authority (Bristol, 1990: 17) - the authority of the text, and by extension, presumably, of the literary critic who is specially placed to interpret the text. Accordingly, the objecting or questioning reader is positioned as "not understanding something", and the locus of meaning is deferred back to the authoritative text, which cannot be interrogated:

> Critical discussion of the general validity of a belief system is deflected back towards the reader's capacity not just to understand but to assent to the text's message... readers can misinterpret, but *the play cannot be wrong* (21).

This insistence on the authority of the text, expressed in terms of aesthetic absolutes and spiritual values, masks a conservative politics whose nostalgia for the past is also a nostalgia for "various forms of archaic repression" (*ibid*). This objection to the use of humanism to valorise a stratified society where none but the voices of the rulers are heard is one of the criticisms directed against Tillyard.[10]

This humanism is English, bourgeois, problematic: a smokescreen for gender and class oppression. It also underlies the development of twentieth-century English studies, in ways linked to English nation building and to colonialism. However, this analysis is produced from, and for, Anglo-American history. It takes on different resonances in twentieth- century South Africa, resonances that are too easily overlooked by South African Shakespeareans who want to ally themselves with the revisionist critics in a laudable need to work against the hypocrisies of English liberalism in apartheid South Africa.

MacArthur calls new historicism "a criticism of confrontation, even subversion, of the benighted criticism of former days" (1989: 80). This oppositional energy, the desire to speak against an ideology characterised as benighted, is one reason why the transposition of this mode of thinking to anti-apartheid South African Shakespearean criticism would seem to work well. But humanism, in anti-apartheid South Africa as well as in post-apartheid South Africa, has in some ways a more complex meaning or presence than it does in the Anglo-American critique of its use in the development of English literary studies in general, and in Renaissance studies in particular, as a cornerstone of the study of Literature. Furthermore, the kind of Shakespearean criticism which wants to speak out

[10] See, for example, Graham Holderness, 1988b: 193. Here, as elsewhere in The Shakespeare Myth (John Drakakis refers, shorthand, to "a moribund Tillyardism" [1988: 26]), and in the oeuvre of new historicist and cultural materialist critics, Tillyard functions as the representative example of all that should be resisted in the presence of humanism in Renaissance studies.

against apartheid fits within a tradition of English liberalism, which is crucially informed by humanism - and which in part produced the South African writers who transformed Shakespeare into a tool of personal and political resistance.

Indeed, as has been suggested above, Todorov for one resists the depiction of humanism offered by the radical critics discussed here. He provides an historical account of the philosophy which stresses its potential to engage with "modern thought in its diversity" (2002: 7). Soper, too, points out that the total rejection of humanism can result from a simplistic invocation of what humanism is. Humanism as a philosophy has multiple potential applications, even if its practice is sometimes problematic:

> We need to distinguish... between two levels of humanist argument – between the assertion of the constitutive role of individuals in the making of history, and the assertion that history itself is the working-out of an immanent human purpose. One can be humanist in the first sense without being committed to a teleological view of history or to the idea that there is a particular social grouping 'destined' to realize humanity's essential "being" or historic purpose. Anti-humanist argument... has tended to conflate these two positions and to assume that both are present in any humanist argument (Soper, 1986: 21).

Furthermore, as Terry Eagleton has pointed out,

> the bourgeois humanist subject is not in fact simply part of a clapped-out history we can all agreeably or reluctantly leave behind: if it is an increasingly inappropriate model at certain levels of subjecthood it remains a potently relevant one at others (Qtd. Lockett, 1996: 11).

The potency of the bourgeois subject will become clear in the course of this thesis, as my assertion is that the liberal humanist subject in South Africa can also be the resisting, anti-apartheid cultural activist. Intrinsic to this resistance is petit-bourgeois class aspiration. This will be discussed in more detail in chapters four and five. At the same time, radical criticism's rejection of the bourgeois humanist subject is itself informed by a liberal valorisation of the subject's right to political justice. Indeed, "[I]t is precisely because human individuals have free will that liberation is possible... Human liberation cannot come about through the rejection or denial of individual autonomy, but only by the affirmation of individual freedom" (Brown, 1993: 28). While many of the objections

made by radical criticism to the uses of liberal humanism in English literary study are compelling, the issue of humanism's role in Shakespeare criticism, and in materialist criticism that seeks to comment on the society from which it is produced, is more complex than a simple rejection of humanism can allow.

Humanism and Human Rights: Humanism in South Africa

Raymond Williams has detailed how the development of a modern, Western, notion of "culture" is implicated in industrialisation, and the concomitant growth of democracy as a bourgeois political system. According to Williams, "culture" came to signify in part an alternative to an increasingly mechanised, democratised society. Thus, "culture" came to refer to an "area of personal and apparently private experience" (1958: xvii).[11]

Part of the development of this notion of "culture" included a radical change in the definitions of art and the artist, and the relationship between these concepts and their places in society. This change, which Williams traces through the end of the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries in England, includes the development of a focus which we may characterise as humanist: "a theory of the 'superior reality' of art, as the seat of imaginative truth, was receiving increasing emphasis" as part of this process of the development of "culture" (32). Williams goes on to sketch how the Romantic notion of the Artist, and the "emphasis on the special nature of art-activity as a means to 'imaginative truth' ", grew in part out of "the opposition on general human grounds to the kind of civilization that was being inaugurated" through the consolidation of the middle classes and industrialisation (36). If Williams is correct, this kind of humanist-informed artistic imperative can be seen to be nostalgic in character. However, what Williams's formulation also stresses is the element of hope which informs this nostalgia, in its search for "general human grounds" that, at least philosophically, do not automatically encode an oppressive political practice: "What was important at this time was the stress given to

[11] This account of the development of a modern sense of "culture" as "a whole way of life" (*ibid*) can be read fruitfully together with Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy, especially with regards to how Arnold's text came to inform a particular notion of the role of English literary study in modern life. See

a mode of human experience and activity which the progress of society seemed increasingly to deny" (39); "What was laid down as a defensive reaction became in the course of the century a most important positive principle, which in its full implications was deeply and generally humane" (40); "The emphasis on a general common humanity was evidently necessary in a period in which a new kind of society was coming to think of man as merely a specialized instrument of production" (42).[12]

It is not surprising that a humanist-inflected conceptual framework should fit with a notion of art which seeks to counter an experience of objectification. According to David Medalie, humanism is based on a philosophical model which conflates "society and personality" (2002: 32). The drive to link the organic human society with the fully-rounded and -developed human subject may partially account for the leftist critics' tone of frustration in the face of an unjust modern society saturated with a humanist discourse. Furthermore, as Medalie points out, the effects of making "a psychological model the basis for social policy amounts to more than reiterating the centrality of the individual"; it also minimises the impact of social and economic factors on the individual (33). This point, about one of the contradictions of humanism, is also made by both Dollimore and Belsey. What Medalie's discussion highlights in addition to humanism's hypocrisy in action, is that as much as it is flawed both philosophically and in historical action, humanism does also contain the possibility for political and social awareness, and a linked compassion that could be conceptualised as human or ethical. This emotion must surely underlie any material action towards large-scale socio-political change, for which leftist critics are working.

Medalie points to the essentialism that continues to underlie this expression of compassion. Thus he points out the "humanistic foundations" of the following statement:

> The material conditions of poorer working-class life are hostile to the attainment of personal efficiency: they not merely stunt physical and

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chapter two.

[12] This formulation, hopeful as it is, does not make room for gender as a factor, even within its overt location in white, English, bourgeois history. Williams's silence around the shared gender of all the Romantic poets in this discussion illustrates the point.

> intellectual growth, but, still more detrimental, they maim the human will, sapping the roots of character (Hobson qtd Medalie: 34).

Central to my purposes here, however, is an emphasis on at least the possibility for compassion, as well as hypocrisy. Williams, too, offers a definition of humanism which stresses its potentials, and not its failures. Thus humanism is "a shaping spirit of aspiration and dignity and compassion" (1966: 29). Without the qualifying adjectives of "liberal", "essential" or "aesthetic", this humanism is differently inflected by a critic working from within the same political tradition as the leftist critics.

Furthermore, in Williams's discussion of "The Romantic Artist" (1958: 30-48), it becomes clear that humanism does not essentially, automatically, and only have to be apolitical. Williams points to the political activities of the Romantic poets, and to the centrality of these activities to their poetry: "The pattern of [social and political] change [through which the Romantics lived] was not background, as we may now [in 1958] be inclined to study it; it was, rather, the mould in which general experience was cast" (31). Furthermore, the separation of "art" and "politics" belongs to a later period, which retrospectively applied a specific notion of the role of culture in human society to the Romantics:

> [T]he supposed opposition between attention to natural beauty and attention to government, or between personal feeling and the nature of man in society, is [not one made by the Romantic poets themselves]. What were seen at the end of the nineteenth century as disparate interests between which a man must choose and in the act of choice declare himself poet or sociologist, were normally, at the beginning of the century, seen as interlocking interests: a conclusion about personal feeling became a conclusion about society, and an observation of natural beauty carried a necessary moral reference to the whole and unified life of man (30).

Williams is describing a politically aware humanism, a mode of thought which, while taking cognisance of "the nature of man in society", also assumes the possibility of an organic fullness ("the whole and unified life") which is linked to the subject as "man".[13]

[13] Humanism's insistence on the link between the autonomous individual and his society is also stressed by

This is an historical view of the development of a humanist way of understanding the construction of the subject in literature that differs from Belsey's. The difference is not only in the emphasis (Williams is concerned with reintegration of politics into Romantic poetry, Belsey with critiquing the implications of the development of the bourgeois modern subject). Williams's perspective also raises the possibility - even if it is not, or has not yet been, realised - that a humanist understanding of the subject is not intrinsically outside the realm of socio-politics. It must also be added, however, following the language in which Williams's point is made above, that Williams seems to be discussing a politicised humanist understanding of the male subject. This refers us back to Belsey's crucial point that humanism, for all its claims to universality, has traditionally been silently gendered.

Medalie provides a detailed outline of the uses of liberal humanism as a political philosophy in England during the rise of modernism (2002: 1-62). He traces the characteristics of liberalism as a discrete system of thought, as well as defining in detail its "traditional bedfellow" (31), humanism. A definition of liberal humanism emerges from this comprehensive historical analysis. Part of this definition, as developed by "several generations of Anglo-American liberal-humanist critics of the 1950s and 1960s" (2), includes "the importance of personal relations, art, the inner life,... the individual" (Beauman qtd Medalie: 2). All of this is familiar. However, it also includes "hostility to the impersonal, the exploitative, the patriarchal, the capitalist and the imperialist" (*ibid*).

Medalie charts the modernist attack on liberalism, and the deliberate attempt by English New Liberals to rework and reinstate liberalism as an ideology that would have something to offer as a political as well as a moral framework. In this sense, political liberalism lays emphasis on the relationship between the individual and the social. Thus, despite its humanist-inflected pull towards the subject *uber alles*, liberalism can have a socially-aware component. What Medalie's analysis of New Liberalism, which as a

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Todorov, for whom humanism historically confirmed "the fundamental sociability of mankind... [and the social] responsibility of the subject (however plural it may be)... [because] the irreducible individual presupposes intersubjectivity" (2002: 33).

cohesive political philosophy sought to respond to what were perceived to be the waning fortunes of political liberalism, points out, is that liberalism can have benign or hopeful political intentions, not only hypocritical at best and nefarious at worst, as objected to by radical critics. Liberalism as a political philosophy in South Africa itself grows out of British political liberalism. Thus the British New Liberalism of the early twentieth century, and the political liberalism established in South Africa in the 1950s, share common roots. In the South African context, the possibilities of liberalism – for both human justice and hypocrisy – are differently inflected by history. This will be taken up in more detail in chapter six.

What becomes clear in Medalie's discussion, which is of importance for the later discussion of South African liberalism, is that New Liberalism cannot escape its bourgeois nature (10). As Belsey demonstrates, the bourgeois component of the humanism that developed within English literary studies in the first half of the last century is partly responsible for the contradictions which cause the strain between humanism's intention, and what occurs socially and politically to human rights. Medalie details the "dilemma [which] results from the reluctance of liberals to give up their entrenched economic advantages" (13). Spender points out that

> Failure to recognize that property was the basis of individual liberty in our society explains the genuine dilemma of many liberals whose loyalty has been divided between the ideal of freedom for all in a classless society and the freedom of a few exceptional beings... liberals have been haunted by the fear that democracy, which they have granted political freedom, would achieve real economic freedom and threaten the liberties of the individual which sprang from property (Qtd Medalie: 13).

As much as it is necessary to see the contradictions of liberal humanism, it is also necessary to be aware of where humanism and its opponents share a common platform. Having shown how Romanticism contributed to the growth of a sense of the Artist which was useful to a later humanism, Williams points out the "continuity between Romantic and Marxist ideas", one of which "was that the basic economic organization could not be separated and excluded from its moral and intellectual concerns" (1958: 280). As

MacArthur's analysis of the relationship between humanism, modernism, and post-modern literary theories makes clear, there is an historical and conceptual continuity between these various modes of thought which vexes any sustained attempt to cast them as opposites, although they may at various times be in combinations of disagreement and reaction to each other. Similarly, Medalie comments on how

> The vigour with which T.E. Hulme, Wyndham Lewis, Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot, for instance, declared the deserved death of liberalism and humanism has had the effect of obscuring the extent to which modernism was both shaped by, and implicated in, what these modernists of a radically illiberal and anti-humanistic stance were pleased to pronounce defunct (2002: 3).

Humanism's contradictory nature - as a philosophy of plenitude that is fundamentally fractured; as a hopeful system of thought which contains the seeds of its own failure - can thus also be traced to its relationship with other, apparently oppositional forces with which it is in fact entwined. Robbe-Grillet comments on humanism's ability "to incorporate everything, including things that may be trying to limit it, or even totally reject it" (qtd Medalie: 35). While this may be one reason for humanism's tenacity, it is also a reason for the amount of opposition it has generated: "[W]hen so much is made of capaciousness and malleability, failures to include or adapt begin to damn the motivating philosophy as well as the discrete attempts" (Medalie: 35). Indeed, Medalie details Forster's exploration of the devastating results of the failure of humanism's good intentions (37).

In its desire to address "programmes for human liberation" (1966: 72), Williams's socialist vision is profoundly humanist: Marxist revolution will ensure "a society in which the incorporation of all its people, *as whole human beings*," is possible (76); "Revolution remains necessary... because there can be no acceptable human order while the full humanity of any class of men is in practice denied" (77).[14] It is thus problematic to

[14] John Noyes says that Marx's distinction "between a philosophy and an ideology of humanism" allowed him to "reject[...] the former outright, while recognising the possibility of the latter as a tool for enabling political action" (2000: 58). This is not to suggest that all forms of Marxism are concerned with human rights. A profoundly non-humanist analysis is possible, where "[t]he universality of humankind is negated through pitiless class warfare, resulting in the physical elimination of class enemies" (Todorov, 2002: 228).

set humanism up as nothing more than "a moribund Tillyardism". Humanism in South Africa, as much as it encodes a moral and political hypocrisy, using humanism's universalism and universal subjecthood to standardize a white English-speaking colonial identity, also underpins an anti-apartheid drive towards human rights.

There is a connection between humanism and human rights in South Africa. Human liberation is reliant on the affirmation of human freedom, as Brown suggests above. Human freedom is a concept implicated in an understanding of subjectivity inflected by humanism: there is a universal valuation to the "human" element which implies the right to freedom, and there must be an extant subject to deserve this freedom. Accordingly, the notion of "human rights for all" which underlay the African National Congress's resistance campaign relies to some extent on a humanist mode of thinking about civil subjects.

For Todorov, "[h]umanism is the ideology underpinning modern democratic states" since the principle of "the subjective will... presides over the modern nation-states" (2002: 6-7; 10). One of the ANC's slogans in the 1994 elections was "democracy for all". Following the logic of its resistance campaign, "human rights" are linked to the new South African "democracy"; each by definition will ensure the other. Each, in the terms offered here, is informed by humanism.

One of the three possible meanings of "humanist", says Todorov, is "those... who tell us that we must treat human beings decently" (2002: 29-30). It is in this "moral sense" (30) also that humanism and human rights connect. "Human rights" depends on a logic of entitlement, on the basis of a shared humanity. Furthermore, humanism in its fullest sense

> tells how men are: a race apart whose members are sociable and partially undetermined - and who for this reason are led to exercise their freedom,... it tells how they should be: cherishing human beings for themselves and according the same dignity to all (30 -31).

The ability to exercise freedom of choice could be rephrased as "democracy for all"; cherishing human beings for themselves and ensuring the same dignity accordingly is

"human rights for all". The twinned invocation of democracy and of human rights in South Africa is significantly reliant on humanism as a mode of thought.
In the stress on subjective will, and on the link between this autonomy and the right to political freedom of choice, humanism's affinity with liberalism as a political system comes into focus. In South Africa, the contradiction at the heart of humanism manifests most evidently as liberal hypocrisy because of the unavoidably obvious intentions of the apartheid political system. Historically, liberalism was in many ways the province of the English-speaking white South African, located outside of Afrikaner Nationalism, but still occupying the position of coloniser, and still privileged by apartheid legislation.

Mike Kirkwood explores the use of "legitimizing emotion" in the construction of white English South Africa's self-identification, which overwrites a more honest, and therefore more painful, understanding of South Africa's colonial history (1976: 102; 104). He offers a critique of the white English South African sense of having been the mediator of humanist values in South Africa, bridging the gap between Afrikaner Nationalism's racism and African nationalism's assumed anti-European imperative. Pointing to the hypocrisy of such a self-positioning, Kirkwood says:

> [W]e are not in the middle because we are on top... Our political opposition to the evolution of apartheid since 1948... is limited to a discussion of the tactics through which domination is to be perpetuated (108).

This is one problem with the liberalism within the group identity Kirkwood assigns to South African English speakers. Using the work of Guy Butler as his representative example, Kirkwood describes this group's solution to its identity crisis as encoded within the statement, "we must unite to cherish and service the English language for the benefit of Africa" (*ibid*). This attitude, Kirkwood points out, is an obfuscation of the identity of the coloniser which underlies the history of what were, at the time of writing, "English-speaking members of the South African ruling class" (123).[15]

[15] I acknowledge here that white South Africans can still be considered the economic ruling class of South Africa, not least in the current success of neo-liberal economic policies which entrench the middle class as the group whose interests are protected. Kirkwood anticipates this situation when he says, "Racial economic domination may be 'modernized' without its nature being fundamentally changed" (124).

Echoing one of the objections against the use of humanism in the construction of meaning through art, Kirkwood goes on to demonstrate that it is the artificial split between culture and politics (a variant of Belsey's critique of the separation of art and politics) which allows such problematic self-deception, characterised as self-knowledge, to develop (110). Even the coloniser awakening to true self-knowledge, who "wishes to reject his role", will

> also be attracted by the humanist literature arising out of the first epoch of colonisation. In the descriptions of a brave new world by Ralegh and Montaigne, for example, he will admire the temper of mind which allows humanism to transcend ethnocentricity, and combines an empirical respect for detail with a readiness to embody the dream of the golden age. Yet here too he will soon begin to see contradictions: Ralegh's gentleness in describing the people of Guiana is opposed by his active participation in the brutal colonization of Ireland nearer home; both he and Montaigne approve of Christianity's spiritual imperialism (131).

Kirkwood traces the development of South African English liberalism as a response to the political situation in South Africa, especially after 1948. He also characterises the "Western culture" with which he sees this liberalism as identifying as humanist and colonial in origin (110-15). In this way, he is discussing a specifically white South African English liberal humanism. While his objections to this philosophy are relevant to any discussion of the shortcomings of liberal humanism to a South African relationship with Shakespeare's texts and reputation, there are aspects of his critique that speak to the founding tradition of Western humanism to which Kirkwood sees white English South Africans as looking for identity and absolution.

While Kirkwood's critique of white English speaking identity is apposite, the tradition of Western humanism in South Africa has a more complicated history, and extends its influence to other incarnations and identities. The creators of what I will characterise in this thesis in chapters four and five as a truly South African Shakespeare, were themselves humanists, products of the mission schools. It was thus this humanist tradition that produced a South African Shakespeare who, if only for elements within the emerging black petit-bourgeoisie, was an important means of voicing opposition and of enacting

subjectivity. Of course, these educated elite have not escaped censure precisely for believing in the humanist promise of universal human rights. The political implications of humanism as imported and used in colonial South Africa can be seen to be as profound as the cultural results. While a humanist education resulted in a rich African response to the literature encountered through the colonisers, humanism has also been held responsible for emasculating a founding generation of African political leaders. Ironically, many of these leaders were also the founders of what came to be the African National Congress, which having brought South Africa to liberation, now rules on the basis of a profoundly liberal-humanist constitution.

David Chanaiwa offers a sustained analysis of "African Humanism in Southern Africa" which, while taking an absolutist position which does not allow for nuances of resistance in the writers he discusses, nevertheless provides useful illustrations of some of the problems of the operation of humanism as a philosophy in South Africa. Chanaiwa defines humanism as an "overwhelming commitment to the ideology of individual dignity, non-racialism, and the brotherhood of mankind, which was not merely a philosophy of life, but a moralist crusade against evil, ignorance, and racism" (1980: 33). Because of the humanist education which shaped them, Chanaiwa alleges that the mission-educated elites "imagined a utopian world of universalism, nonracialism, and moralism that was antithetical to the racist world of settler colonialism". This understanding of their world was "unrealistic and self-defeating". As a result, they "achieved minimal practical gains before World War II" (9). Chanaiwa's analysis points to the propensity in a system which stresses "universality, nonracialism and moralism" to steer clear of revolutionary political action. In the context of colonialism as both a local and a global phenomenon, it is understandable that humanism has been accused of entrenching oppression while speaking a rational universalism. This is one of the manifestations of a contradiction in a philosophy which proposes a universal human essence while at the same time defining that essence narrowly, with conservative political results. For Chanaiwa, the humanism of the early South African elite became their rose-coloured glasses:

> Retrospectively, we can see that the elites were often so carried away by their humanistic impulse towards the universal person... and towards brotherhood based on Christianity, reason, and goodwill that they consequently missed the real, specific, and immediate problem of predatory settler colonialism... They misjudged the parliamentary struggle between English and Afrikaner colonists, which was nothing more than family differences between groups of privileged white settlers over economic and social dividends and over some of the psychological qualms of colonial domination (31).

The political implications of humanism, ranging from an almost unintentional hypocrisy to an insidious and deliberate attempt to prevent real change, are thus mapped in Kirkwood's and Chaniawa's accounts. Humanism has been useful to both white English-speaking South Africans, and to the group from which came a tradition of South African writing in English which was informed, both literally and symbolically, by a familiarity with Shakespeare as a symbol of the best of Western learning. This usefulness can be inflected by an understanding of the problems and contradictions of humanism as pointed out by the Anglo-American radical critics, as well as by Kirkwood and Chaniawa from South African perspectives.

However, it is also important to remember that precisely in its avowal of the human rights of all humans, based on a notion of something essentially shared, humanism could be made to stand in opposition to apartheid's dehumanising policies. In his defence statement made during the Rivonia Trial, Nelson Mandela's commitment to a democratic, humanist vision is central to both his argument and his strategy. Mandela speaks of the Freedom Charter, which now underlies South Africa's constitution, as the political document which encodes "the concept of freedom and fulfilment for the African people in their own land". Furthermore, as part of his strategy to attain a society which entrenches human rights, Mandela proclaims his support for the system condemned by Belsey as fundamentally problematic:

> The Magna Carta, the Petition of Rights, and the Bill of Rights are documents which are held in veneration by democrats throughout the world... I have great respect for British political institutions, and for the country's system of justice (1989: 182-3).

Invoking "that quintessential humanistic virtue, dignity" (Medalie, 2002: 52), Mandela proclaims "the lack of human dignity" as one of the main "features which are the hallmarks of African life in South Africa", and against which "we fight" (1989: 184). His famous ending opposes racism to human rationality, and reaffirms his commitment to democracy. Furthermore, in this formulation, suffering informs, animates, and legitimates resistance. Suffering does not paralyse, *pace* Dollimore. Thus, the ideas of a rational, whole individuality; of a basic shared humanity; of a Western democratic system which is the product of the development of the bourgeoisie; and the suffering human subject's experience, inform Mandela's resistance:

> [The ANC's] struggle... is a struggle of the African people, inspired by their own suffering and their own experience. It is a struggle for the right to live. During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people... I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities (178).

Of course, for Mandela in apartheid South Africa in 1964, it was imperative that he separate the points he wished to make about what he calls African patriotism (182) from what was understood as "communism".[16] Similarly, it is arguable that the discourse of human rights which underlies the hopes of a new South Africa has failed as profoundly as humanism, and is being used as cynically and as hypocritically by the neo-Liberal current ANC as humanist principles ever were by the developing English bourgeoisie, by colonialism, or indeed by the development of English literary studies - but that is outside of the scope of the current investigation. The point is rather that in South Africa, humanism became a discourse Mandela could use to oppose apartheid - that, in other

[16] While it was strategically important for Mandela to avoid being dismissed as a "communist" in order for his moral point against the apartheid state to be made, the definition of communism given during the State's concluding address makes it clear that any opposition to apartheid could conveniently be classed as "communist":

> Communism means... in particular, any doctrine or scheme which aims at bringing about any political, industrial, social or economic change within the Republic by the promotion of disturbance or disorder, by unlawful acts or omissions or by the threat of such acts or omissions or by means which include the promotion of disturbance or disorder or such acts or omissions or threats (Rivonia Trial: State's Concluding Address Part II [S.I.: s.n., 1963? {sic}], 193-4).

words, humanism has at least the discursive potential to be used in the service of the political left.

The discursive potential of humanism became available for Mandela to use as a powerful political rhetoric of hope, post-liberation. In his inaugural presidential speech, the discourse of humanism is strong:

> Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long, must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud. Our daily deeds as ordinary South Africans must produce an actual South African reality that will reinforce humanity's belief in justice, strengthen its confidence in the nobility of the human soul and sustain all our hopes for a glorious life for all (1994: 1).

Similarly, during his State of the Nation address on 24 May 1994, Mandela speaks to the fragile and emerging nation with the full humanist force of his personal authority:

> Our single most important challenge is... to help establish a social order in which the freedom of the individual will truly mean the freedom of the individual. We must construct that people-centred society of freedom in such a manner that it guarantees the political liberties and the human rights of all our citizens (8).

In a complex and penetrating analysis of the potential and pitfalls of humanism in South Africa, John Noyes has pointed out the central way in which humanism underlies the hopes of post-apartheid South Africa. Humanism could be more easily refused by a European tradition which he locates, as is appropriate for an essay on cultural studies, in "the spectre of humanism's barbarism... which the Frankfurt School had raised against the rhetoric of capitalist culture" (2000: 54). However, Noyes demonstrates that humanism as a general philosophy cannot be easily rejected in post-apartheid South Africa. He points out that

> the entire self-conception of the liberation struggle, from the Freedom Charter to the new constitution, has been decidedly humanist. For how is it possible to conceive of a culture of human rights that is not essentially humanist? (54-5).

Noyes also illustrates the difficulties in trying to create an anti-humanist position which does not eventually collapse into "the authoritarian discourse it seeks to oppose" (55).[17]

Noyes discusses the need to be able to theorise "a general human identity, a common identity in South Africa today", and posits as the main task of the intellectual in South Africa the need to articulate a utopian discourse which relies on the idea of the human in everyday life. But we have no spaces, conceptual or structural, in which to begin such an imagining, not least because there is a theoretical tension between identity politics and the acknowledgement of "the theoretical impossibility of a coherent identity in any one location" (53). The problem then becomes that the intellectual is torn between a "common human... identity", endorsed by anti-apartheid humanism, and what can be seen as "cultural or ethnic... difference" as articulated by a post-apartheid "culture of pluralism" (54).

Noyes's stress on the need for "human rights in practice" (60), and his reminder that underlying the notion of "human rights" is a communal or universal humanity, retains for humanism the possibility of being translated into political action. In the context of critiques such as Chanaiwa's, and the recent radical critical history of the total refusal of humanism as politically or philosophically acceptable, Noyes offers a new way to view the possibilities of humanism in post-apartheid South Africa which make it more difficult to reject out of hand.

Spivak addresses the need to "bring universal humanism and difference together", while acknowledging part of the problem with the suggestion that "you cannot have any kind of emancipatory project *without* some notion of the ways in which human beings are similar" is that

> Historically, the people who have been involved in emancipatory projects from above - slave-holders and proponents of Christianizing the natives,

[17] Perhaps one version of such a contradiction can be found in Albie Sachs's celebratory paper on South African culture under the new dispensation, "Preparing Ourselves for Freedom" which, in seeking to outline a South African culture capable of imagining a post-apartheid plurality, invariably falls into humanist assumptions about the status of the artist (1990).

and so on - are the ones who have produced the discourse (1991: 227).

This is a vital reminder, and is part of the reason for the inclusion of the last chapter of this thesis. As much as I point to the resistant, triumphantly transformative nature of South African Shakespeare, I want to flag the potential problems with liberal humanism, which are still present in the current political and cultural discourses in South Africa. For Spivak, the historical contradiction she has raised "can be avoided only if the principle of a universal humanism - the place where indeed all human beings are similar - is seen to be lodged in their being different" (228). In other words, what we share is that we are different, with the reminder that difference is not a monolithic concept. Then "notions of difference rather than notions of identity" become "the basis of universal humanism" (229). This is a neat way of avoiding the philosophical problem of the unified subject which lies at the heart of traditional liberal humanism, and which underlies the notion of the human subject recognised by a discourse of human rights.

How, if at all, do the possibilities raised by Noyes and Spivak change the possibilities inherent in a humanist Shakespeare? The radical Shakespearean critical tradition in South Africa has been relatively understaffed, and vigorously oppositional in its energy. It draws on the notion of humanism as it is expounded in the Anglo-American tradition, and does not engage with the other uses to which humanism has been put in the anti-apartheid struggle. Precisely because of the failure to deal with the contradictions and ambivalences within humanism as outlined above, South African radical Shakespearean criticism is fundamentally theoretically contradictory, reinscribing the humanist Shakespeare it seeks to critique. This is explored in more detail in chapter three.

"Liberal" and "humanist" are two different terms, which carry quite different inflections, notwithstanding the existence of a protean philosophy of thought called "liberal humanism". Not only are there different kinds of humanism - ranging from the kinds of thinking critiqued as "liberal", "essential", or "aesthetic" humanism, to what I have denoted here as "radical humanism", and including Williams's brand of Marxist humanism. The terms "liberal" and "humanist" mean particular, and sometimes

contradictory, ideas in South Africa specifically. In a South African context, "humanism" can denote African communality; it can be a way to invoke the spirit of ubuntu (Makgoba, 1998; see chapter six). "Liberal" can mean any combination of the epithets privileged, conservative, white, racist. At the same time, "liberalism" has been proposed as the one true path for South Africa (this is also discussed in chapter six). While liberalism has informed African liberation politics, and the development of an African middle class, "African humanism" has been critiqued as part of that tradition which entrenched racial oppression by creating an African petit-bourgeoisie and keeping it tame (Chanaiwa, 1980).

There is a political and social history which combines all of these elements of both humanism and liberalism. This history runs through the mission schools' humanist education policies, and Christianity, into the founding of the ANC, and thence into struggle politics. This is a trajectory which stresses the liberal lynchpins of the ANC, and of the current political dispensation. However, reviewing the recent prolific debates on the role of liberalism in South Africa, one would be forgiven for thinking that liberalism and the current political dispensation were at different points in the political spectrum. Like so much else in South Africa, the differences between schools of thought have been stressed in ways which obscure their similarities, and their conjoined historical development. According to much recent writing by white liberals, so-called "Marxist" thinking, which is characterised by a strong critique of liberalism as a political philosophy and as a social practice, belongs to the struggle tradition of African nationalism, which is perceived at its most extreme as anti-white, which is to say: anti-liberal, fanatical, extreme, and misguided in its concentration on capitalism as the core problem at the root of South Africa's racial/ social/ political difficulties (Butler, Elphick & Welsh, 1987. See chapter six).

Amongst this complex web of material history, philosophical strands of thought, and politics, we can place the development of writing in English in South Africa. The history of this writing in English cannot be separated from a liberal, humanist tradition, of which

Shakespeare forms an important part, both as a symbol of education and as an influence. While "liberal humanism" becomes a kind of expletive for a tradition of Anglo-American criticism which recognises Shakespeare's role in colonial and nationalist practices, for self-proclaimed "Africanists" like Makgoba, the term "humanistic" denotes all that is African, opposed to white privilege and racism – and thus truly liberal (1998).

Humanism as a system of thought, characterised by European philosophical history, played out in colonialism, and implicated in the development of English literary studies, has a link to political liberalism. Expressing a fundamentally bourgeois imperative, both stress individual rights. Due to "his" status as the ultimate expressor of the universally human, and played out in "his" role in national education systems and in global systems of cultural capital, Shakespeare is implicated in these politically, morally, theoretically, problematic philosophies. But there is another angle of vision, where this liberal humanist Shakespeare, characterised by the same terminology, denotes something different in a South African context. This other Shakespeare was part of the anti-apartheid struggle, and "his" values inform post-apartheid South Africa.

This thesis seeks to explore a cultural manifestation of this complex South African figure, through the use made of Shakespeare in the development of an indigenous literature in the course of the twentieth century. I seek to stress the similarities between discourses that so far have presented themselves as opposed - this includes radical Shakespearean criticism and its relationship to what it calls liberal humanism. It includes the role of a colonially-disseminated Shakespeare in a tradition of cultural resistance in South Africa. At the same time, I point out that while the development of literature written in English can be conceived of as having one trajectory which relies on *both* a liberal, humanist, colonial tradition *and* a sense of opposition to racism and entrenched inequality, this trajectory cannot be valorised as emancipatory without due attention being paid to its constituent parts. Class and gender are crucial factors in the expression of this trajectory - both in how and in why South African writing in English developed in the way that it did. If a class and gender analysis is brought into the investigation of this trajectory, what

emerges from an exploration of a particular history of a use of Shakespeare in South Africa is a black, African, middle-class, male trajectory which is significantly liberal even as it protests against the hypocrisies of white liberalism.

En route to a more detailed discussion of this trajectory in chapters four and five, I begin by mapping Shakespeare's role as the embodiment of Literature in colonial practices. This entails a brief investigation of the genesis, development, and nature, of English literary studies. Such an exploration of English literary studies inevitably raises questions about its, and concomitantly, Shakespeare's, status in South Africa, and in all once-colonised states. This is the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter 2: English Literature's Shakespeare in South Africa

> [A] serious interest in the possibilities of the study of literature at the University can hardly fail to become a preoccupation with the problem of devising a humane education to take the place of the old, now, in the face of modern conditions, so patently inadequate, and that problem can hardly fail to pose itself as one of bringing into relation a diversity of fields of knowledge and thought.
>
> The crisis in English... is [not] directly, yet, a question of English Departments being closed down along with other economically unproductive... areas... Rather, it is a question, posed from within, as to what English *is*,... Whether it has a future, whether it *should* have a future as a discrete discipline, and if it does, in what ways it might be reconstituted.
>
> There is a serious crisis in education... More than ever before in the recent history of this nation, educators are compelled to confront the biases that have shaped teaching practices in our society... The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy.
>
> Few persons active and alert in the area of English studies in contemporary South Africa can be unaware of a growing crisis of confidence in the discipline as to what it *is* and what it is supposed to *do*.

Each of the above extracts speaks to some of the issues facing university English Departments in South Africa today. In fact, the extracts come from, in order, F.R. Leavis's Education and the University, written in 1943, seeking solutions to what he saw as a social and educational crisis crucial to England's sense of national identity and moral fibre (9); Peter Widdowson's contribution to a book published in 1982 that addresses an Anglo-American crisis in English literature as it affected education practices in universities in Britain (7); bell hooks's introduction to Teaching to Transgress, published in 1994 and discussing the liberatory potential of education in America (12); and finally, the introductory essay to a book on Teaching English Literature in South Africa that was published just over ten years ago (Wright, 1990: 1).

What this juxtaposition of quotations suggests is that a crisis of identity, purpose, reception, and economics in the university teaching of English Literature is not unique to

South Africa, and not unique to our current political, social, or economic climate. There is arguably something endemic to the origins of English as a discipline that has lead to a field which continually destabilises, or mistrusts, itself:

> Some may feel... that the price - in consistency, in sheer self-respect - of salvaging the legitimacy of an activity for whose status as a "genuinely worthwhile mode of knowledge" we have rarely had more than its own word, is too great (Davis, 1982: 36).

Because English literary study was established to transmit, and has an ongoing relationship with, a construct called "culture", the discipline is in a constant state of struggle, like the entity - "culture" - with which it is entwined. English as a discipline has signified the transmission of "high culture", Matthew Arnold's anarchy-countering, state-education dependent, internally personal "pursuit of total perfection... the best which has been thought and said in the world" (1994 [1869]: 5).[1] The discipline also encompasses a range of activities which include analyses of various forms of "everyday culture" (During, 1993; Williams, 1958). The development of the discipline of English literature is linked to a specific historical-cultural-political enterprise, and carries the legacy of its inception accordingly.

At the start of her investigation into the development of English literature as a discipline in nineteenth-century India, Gauri Viswanathan warns:

> [T]he discipline of English came into its own in an age of colonialism... no serious account of its growth and development can afford to ignore the imperial mission of educating and civilizing colonial subjects in the literature and thought of England, a mission that in the long run served to strengthen Western cultural hegemony in enormously complex ways (1989: 2).[2]

[1] Janet MacArthur details how the "romantic-expressivist enthusiasm" of early twentieth-century literary critics "was put into the service of establishing a respectable disciplinary status for English literature" (1989: 11). She also details at some length the development of English studies in early twentieth-century England, and the role of Shakespeare as privileged in these discussions (1989: 14-22, esp. 20-2).

[2] For an alternative account of colonial education practices, one which aims to counter some of the broad criticisms of colonial education practices generally (not just those of England), and to nuance the discussion by insisting that practices differed according to geography and in effect, see Watson, 1982. For an explication of the view that "It can hardly be argued... that colonial governments deliberately used schools as a means of social control" in Africa at least, because of the independent role of the mission schools after World War II, see Garvey, 1982: 66.

Viswanathan illustrates that the deliberate use of English literary education for social control was begun in India even before it was implemented in England amongst the working classes. She demonstrates that the development of English as a subject is inextricably tied into processes of colonisation in India, albeit in ways that reveal the internal contradictions and vulnerabilities of the imperial mission.

The power that the English literary text had to shape conditions in the colonised world is commented upon by diverse practitioners of literature, located both at the receiving end of literature that was implicated in colonial discourse, and at the point of production of literary colonial discourse. The Malawian poet Felix Mnthali insists on the connection between the dissemination of "Eng. Lit." and material conditions of power in "The Stranglehold of English Lit." (Moore & Beier, 1984: 139-40):

> … if we had asked
> why Jane Austen's people
> carouse all day
> and do no work
>
> would Europe in Africa
> have stood
> the test of time?…
>
> Your elegance of deceit,
> Jane Austen,
> lulled the sons and daughters
> of the dispossessed
> into a calf-love
> with irony and satire
> around imaginary people.
>
> While history went on mocking
> the victims of branding irons
> and sugar-plantations
> that made Jane Austen's people
> wealth beyond compare!

Mnthali addresses English Literature by addressing a series of questions directly to Austen as its representative. By invoking an author who was (and is) taught as emblematic of the best of the English realist novelists, Mnthali is invoking the canon as it

was received through the tertiary education system. Austen is also apposite because her work is known as social critique, documenting and commenting upon the manners of her society.

The question that Mnthali asks in this extract directly addresses the discrepancy between the particularly English world universalised as expressive of common human experience, and the realities of African life under colonialism. Mnthali points to the broader economic system that enabled "Jane Austen's people" (thus, through the possessive, emphasising the national character of the literature, and linking the fictional world with the material reality of the English) to "carouse all day/ and do no work" which is not acknowledged by the literature. It is precisely the absence of acknowledgement of material reality which he characterises as "deceit".

The "elegance" of this deceit is the literariness of English Literature present in Austen's "irony and satire". The elegance of the deceitful system is also seen in the "calf-love" this literariness engendered in its African students. The implication is that it was the literary quality of English literature that "lulled" the colonised into believing in the literature's beauty, in what the English - through their literature - were saying, at the expense of seeing what the English were doing in Africa. So in addition to the literature being guilty of omitting the realities of exploitation in the colonies, it is partially responsible for perpetuating colonial conditions. Mnthali concludes:

> Eng. Lit…
> was more than a cruel joke –
> it was the heart
> of an alien conquest.

Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden" coined a phrase with which to conceptualise the so-called "civilising mission" he presents the English as nobly accepting. "The White Man's Burden" (Kipling, 1930: 320-21) encodes the assumption that the White Man, here represented by his most supreme embodiment, the English Man, has had the duty of civilisation thrust upon him by virtue of the superior characteristics he

possesses. Superiority is indicated not only by his whiteness which metonymically indicates his moral purity; it is also expressed through the glorious history of which English literature is both product and proof:

> Take up the White Man's burden-
> Send forth the best ye breed-
> Go bind your sons to exile
> To serve your captives' need;
> To wait in heavy harness,
> On fluttered folk and wild-
> Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
> Half-devil and half child...
>
> Take up the White Man's burden-
> And reap his old reward:
> The blame of those ye better,
> the hate of those ye guard -
> The cry of hosts ye humour
> (Ah slowly!) toward the light: -
> "Why brought ye us from bondage,
> "Our loved Egyptian night?"
>
> Take up the White Man's burden -
> Ye dare not stoop to less -
> Nor call too loud on Freedom
> To cloak your weariness;
> By all ye cry or whisper,
> By all ye leave or do,
> The silent, sullen peoples
> Shall weigh your Gods and you.

The discursive strategies used to represent the colonised as morally, politically, and socially inferior are not subtle. The "captives", "fluttered... and wild", are both childish and devilish, they swarm in "hosts" and, like the children of Israel blinded by generations of slavery, cannot see the truth of their leaders' vision, or the presence of God, for having been so long in what, in their ignorance, they have come to "love[...]", their "Egyptian night". The fact of their attachment to their moral bondage becomes proof of their need for guidance, which in turn illustrates their under-developed human potential: their lesser humanity. The debased human potential of these colonised is indicated also by their silence and "sullen[ness]". Unlike their civilised masters, they do not possess the capacity

for speech, and by implication certainly not that most eloquent and carefully structured of speech, literature. That what they can express they do sullenly, further marks the kind of speech to which they have access as child-like, immature, and inarticulate. Underlying the binary of (white) civilised/ (black) uncivilised Kipling is using here, is the lurking presence of English Literature as part of an inheritance which becomes proof of the moral superiority that justifies political and economic intervention. "Culture", as expressed by the presence of a history which is chronicled partly through great works of literature - "all ye leave or do" - becomes the motivating factor for colonialism.

The belief in English moral superiority, expressed in poetry and thus contributing to one of the systems which chronicles that superiority, is an example of Mnthali's "elegance of deceit". The act of passing on the conviction of superiority (with all the implications which justify imperialism) by passing on English Literature as a discursive system which encodes this conviction, is what Viswanathan calls "voluntary cultural assimilation as the most effective form of political action". Minutes recording an exchange in British India in 1838 raise the spectre of Kipling's construction of the White Man: " 'The Natives must either be kept down by a sense of our power, or they must willingly submit from a conviction that we are more wise, more just, more humane, and more anxious to improve their condition than any other rulers they could possibly have' " (1997: 113). For Kipling, the truth of these superior attributes propels a moral imperative for action. The additional element of political control, without the overt tone of self-sacrifice and moral responsibility, is brought out here by the emphasis on "keeping down" the "natives", if not *first* through "power" directly, *then* by a belief in the English right to rule. Indeed, Viswanathan comments:

> Implicit in this statement by a high-ranking British official [J. Farish] in the Bombay administration is a recognition of the importance of self-representation, or the production of an image of the "ideal" Englishman. Logically, there were two sources from which the colonial subjects could derive an idea of the humaneness and justness of their rulers, one actual (i.e. through British actions and behaviour) and the other representational (113-4).

Given that the actual behaviour of the English in India could seldom be held up as a model of humaneness and justness ("The East India Company's servants who were sent to India were often charged by Englishmen themselves with intemperance and rapacity" [114]), it became increasingly important to rely on representational sources to do this ideological work, to present the English as a benign and civilising force, and Viswanathan details "the ways in which the literature and arts of England were gradually put to use to convey an image of the 'ideal' Englishman" (114). This began with parliamentary reforms in education explicitly designed to counter the charges of immorality caused by the behaviour of the East India Company's staff in India (114-5). There was also tension between parliament and the missionaries working in India, which was "productively resolved through the introduction of English literature" (119) which acquired a quasi-religious tone through its civilising potential. She details the cultural implications of the education policy that developed:

> the strategy of locating authority in English texts all but effaced the often sordid history of colonialist expropriation, material exploitation, and class and race oppression behind European world dominance. Making the Englishman known to the natives through the results of his mental labor removed him from the plane of ongoing colonialist activity... production of thought defined the Englishman's true essence, overriding all other aspects of his identity - his personality, actions, behavior... The split between the material and the cultural practices of colonialism is nowhere sharper than in the progressive rarefaction of the rapacious, exploitative, and ruthless actor of history into the reflective subject of literature (127-8).

The "split between the material and the cultural practices of colonialism" is precisely what is noted by Mnthali, and demonstrated by Kipling, whose poem overrides the realities of historical action (which would suggest that the White Man should not be lionised for all he says and does) by the production of an idealised figure – the English Man. This figure is embodied by his capacity for high culture, in comparison to his "native" charges, who have neither high culture nor the language with which to express it.

The use of written English as a medium to dominate might have preceded even the formal development of the discipline of English Literature in India, or in its country of origin.

Brian Doyle suggests the "more direct exercises of power" undertaken through the use of the written word began with the Tudors' development of a national currency of written and printed forms, and the increased status accompanying such forms (1982: 19). Thus the development of authorial identity; its relation to the commodification of writing; rank; and, through its ability to confer rank as well as through its power of censorship, the relationship of the state to the notion of literature, are all germane to the location and definition of English literature (Febvre & Martin, 1979; Wall, 1993; Marotti, 1995). This suggests that the act of disseminating written texts has always been implicated in the operations of power on both discursive and material levels, even before standardised, formal teaching was established as a means of transmission of texts, with the concomitant "civilising" agendas for both the English working classes and colonial subjects of Empire.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o characterises the suppression of native language and the elevation of the language of the conqueror as an integral part of the colonisation process, and implicates education as a system: "The French... had given the whole process a name: *assimilation*. The English... simply called it *education*" (1993: 32). Ngugi details the systematisation of English studies in schools and universities in Kenya after World War II. He finds that "even at its most humane and universal, [English literature] necessarily reflected the European experience of history", a perspective which Ngugi insists is detrimental to the African scholar's sense of self (1986: 91). More than that, he objects that this humanist use of the English literary tradition reduced complex and incisive work to the writing of "mindless geniuses whose only consistent quality was a sense of compassion":

> These writers, who had the sharpest and most penetrating observations on the European bourgeois culture, were often taught as if their only concern was with the universal themes of love, fear, birth and death. Sometimes their greatness was presented as one more English gift to the world alongside the bible and the needle. William Shakespeare and Jesus Christ brought light to darkest Africa. There was a teacher in our school who used to say that Shakespeare and Jesus used very simple English, until someone pointed out that Jesus spoke Hebrew. The "Great Tradition" of English literature was the great tradition of "literature"! (1986: 91).

For Ngugi, the colonised mind of the colonial child is linguistically, and thus culturally, imposed upon by a tradition which deems itself universal: "From the point of view of [cultural] alienation... it does not matter that the imported literature carried the great humanist tradition of the best in Shakespeare..."(1986: 17-18). English is not the "language of humankind" (1986:109), and its presentation as such has profound personal, cultural, and political consequences for those who are not English.

Ngugi frames his discussion of the politics of language in literature as a discussion of "national, democratic and human liberation... a call for the rediscovery of the real language of humankind: the language of struggle" (1986: 108). Thus he relies upon one kind of humanism to counter the presence of another. In his discussions about language, he relies upon the necessary predication of the concept of humanity to the notion of freedom struggles ("human liberation"); it is commonsensical that human rights should be fought for. For Ngugi, the hypocritical promise of universal franchise in the humanist literature of the West is adversely affected by the medium through which this message is transmitted. English as a language has a history of use which affects its capacity to function as an expressor of human rights.

Elsewhere, by implicitly contrasting the history of the development of Kiswahili with the colonial history of English as a language, he pointedly suggests that the history of oppression in which English is implicated is a legacy that users of the language must face:

> [D]espite its history of imperialist aggression against other languages and peoples, English would make a credible candidate [for a language for the world]. Such applicants must in the meantime work hard to remove such negative qualities as racism, sexism, national chauvinism, and negative images of other nationalities and races so as to meet the criteria of acceptance as a language for the world. In this respect Kiswahili would make an excellent candidate for the world language. It already has the advantage of never having grown in the graveyard of other languages. Kiswahili has created space for itself in Africa and the world without displaying any national chauvinism. The power of Kiswahili has not depended on its economic, political, or cultural aggrandizement. It has no history of oppression or domination of other cultures. And yet Kiswahili is now spoken as a major language in eastern, central, and southern Africa, as well as in many other parts of the world (1993: 40-1).

Ngugi is suggesting that English cannot, without much reparation, be a language of humanity (and here again Ngugi conflates "humanity" with "struggle", calling into being a differently-inflected humanism) despite the strong tradition of a literature that is presented as universal in its themes and modes of expression. The colonial history of the spread of English globally becomes part of the language's character, in this formulation.

If Ngugi is correct, the implications for its continued presence in neo-colonial universities are serious: housing and feeding such a beast is surely an activity not only difficult to justify, but dangerous for the well-being of its keepers, who will continually be subject to the negative psychic ramifications of working with the sly and contrary creature. And yet, many post-colonial practitioners of English literary study insist on the complex nature of Eng. Lit.'s relationship to cultures once colonised by the discipline with which they now have a working relationship.

Despite her detailed investigation of the history of English literature as a tool of colonial control in India, Viswanathan ultimately concludes that the modern relationship between British Empire and English Literature is not to be "readily understood… There are no simple lessons to be derived from this history, least of all the lesson that imperialism can be swiftly undone merely by hurling away the texts it institutionalized" (169). Viswanathan acknowledges that English literature is still being taught in Indian universities, and wants to separate that activity from its imperial past.

> [T]he fact that English continues to be taught and studied in today's India obliges me to sound a final, cautionary note against reading the history of nineteenth-century English studies as continuous with contemporary educational practice in India. The danger of reading the history of modern English studies as uninterrupted narrative is so obvious that I fear I may be insulting the intelligence of my readers by warning against certain possible inferences, the two most treacherous being that assaults on the Western canon are virtually precluded in the land where the discipline of English was shaped and that an unquestioning acceptance of Western literary values is now firmly institutionalised there (1989: 168-9).[3]

[3] In contrast, Aijaz Ahmad speaks of the Indian university's "genetic… relation with – indeed, dependencies upon – its British and American counterparts… knowledges produced there become immediately effective here, in a relation of imperial dominance, shaping even the way we think of

She points to the fact that the relationship between imperial educational practices and what exists currently in ex-colonies is not simply causal: "[I]n an effort to understand the relations between English studies and colonialism there is always the danger of claiming an overriding determinism in the relation" (1989: 120). Viswanathan needs to point to the complexities in locating a direct causal continuity of the present and the past, or she will have made a case for the rejection of the field within which she works. Surely if English literary study's colonial history is taken into account fully, the conclusions for modern-day departments of English in ex- or neo- colonies must be similar to those made in what Ngugi calls the Nairobi Literature Debate: English departments should be scrapped in response to an acknowledgement of the intentions and effects of colonial uses of English literature (1986: 87-108). If the establishment and development of English literary studies as a discipline are as seriously implicated in a project of cultural (and political and economic) control, as well as the development of a nationalism which would prop up these projects, as Viswanathan, Ngugi, and others suggest (Belsey, 1982; Longhurst, 1982)[4], is it enough simply to conclude that the continued existence of the discipline overwrites the conditions of its birth?

Yet it is clear from Viswanathan's own work, as well as from the work of her colleagues, that English literature does indeed have a valuable Indian history.[5] An awareness of the oppressive practices embedded in the spread of English needs to be complemented by a vision of the range and depth of the responses of the colonised. Bill Ashcroft believes that "while ideology, discourse or language constrain subjects, they do not imprison them, nor are subjects immobilised by power". Accordingly, Ashcroft wants

> a principle of post-colonial agency which concedes, on the one hand, the central function of language in "forming" subjectivity, but which

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ourselves". It is in English faculties that "this parasitic intellectual dependence of the Indian university upon its metropolitan counterparts [is] so obvious" (1992: 44).

[4] "A connection... exist[s] between the material plunder of South Africa by English capitalists, the continuing racial subordination of the majority of the population, and the teaching of Shakespeare" (Johnson, 1996: 72). For a discussion of the Great Tradition's links to colonialism and South African liberalism, see Vaughan, 1984.

[5] The work of Ania Loomba, to which I will refer repeatedly in the course of this thesis, is one example of theoretical work; Salman Rushdie's novel The Moor's Last Sigh, is a recent literary example (1995).

> confirms the capacity of the colonized subject to intervene in the material conditions of suppression in order to "transform" them (2001: 47).

English – the language and the literature – has been transformed by South Africans who have made fruitful use of both. The role of English in South Africa as a language of resistance has been discussed (Mphahlele, 1984; Kirkwood, 1976; Pechey, 1994), making it clear that English as a language, partially disseminated by a tradition of literature, does indeed have a complex relation to its colonial past.

English literary study's childhood is only a part of the story of its life. Malvern Van Wyk Smith acknowledges the colonial political agenda embedded in both English literary study and its spread. However, he rejects the notion that English has to be defined by its conservative political beginnings. It may not be (following Arnold) "an agency for transmitting 'the best that is known and thought in the world' " but it is not necessarily always only "so much suspect, elitist cultural garbage" (1990: 10). Laurence Wright, too, rejects the notion that the parts of English literature that refer to the literature of England - and specifically Shakespeare - do not offer something of worth to students in and of themselves (1988).

Like India, Africa has an experience of "Shakespeare". "Shakespeare", as a body of texts and as an icon of education and civility, was a key component of the literature disseminated during colonial education development. And yet the experience of "Shakespeare" by Africans is not any less "African" for being implicated in cultural imperialism.

Wright identifies two "contrasting… versions" of African cultural nationalism, one amenable to "Shakespeare" and one hostile (1990/91: 31). The former Wright classes as liberal, engaged with the modern world, and international in its influences and aims (in other words, although not named as such by Wright, humanist). The latter is " 'closed', 'oppositional',… radical" and "largely the preserve of a minority of the intelligentsia" (31; 34). Furthermore, Wright distinguishes between two kinds of resistance to

Shakespeare, ideological and pedagogical. Wright counters pedagogical claims of linguistic inappropriateness by pointing out that African academics themselves have asked for English literature, and by referring to debates that complicate the link between literature and language acquisition (33-4).

It is clear which of the two traditions Wright feels is more reflective of the will of the majority of the African people, and which is more beneficial to Africa. The discussion of humanism in chapter one of this thesis can be used to complicate Wright's separation of what appears to be a humanist tradition from what appears to be a "Marxist" (34) one. As I argue there, the removal of politically radical potential from humanism can be seen to be artificial in a South African context. In addition, as Wright goes on to suggest, Shakespeare has become a component of African culture, and as Ali Mazrui details below, of African political life as well.

Wright offers a detailed exposition of why Shakespeare was, and remains, an important influence on African writers and education. He locates Shakespeare's popularity and longevity first and foremost in factors that are far less sinister than Viswanathan's, although he does recognise "the international prestige enjoyed by Shakespeare and the influence of the nineteenth century idea of a liberal education" (33). The first factor is the initial paucity of African dramatists, which led "naturally" to Shakespeare's filling the gap in syllabuses (Wright is not primarily concerned with the historical processes behind "the international prestige enjoyed by Shakespeare", and the naturalisation of Shakespeare as the obvious solution to a gap in syllabuses whose contents themselves carry historical and ideological implications).

The second factor is the prestige attached to a Western education (32-3). Wright does denote this tendency "conservative" (33). At the same time, he characterises those who do not support the rational, open, internationalist voice of liberal, African, cultural nationalism as, ultimately, uneducated, unrefined, and uncouth: "there is the occasional

crude diatribe linking [Shakespeare] with a vast western conspiracy of racism and exploitation portrayed in vulgar Marxist terms" (34).

Wright's firm commitment to a universal Shakespeare is clear in the conclusion to his essay. After traversing the various ways in which Shakespeare's relationship with Africa was developed and maintained, from education practices to amateur dramatics to the diplomatic endeavours of the British Council, Wright's final paragraph turns to aesthetic judgement:

> [T]he obvious *lacuna* in this brief review of Shakespeare in post-colonial Africa is the absence of any mention of his quality as a writer… Shakespeare has become part of world culture. If he were not the calibre of artist he is, no degree of ideological appropriateness or educational habituation could prevent him sliding into the mists of Africa's colonial history. It is this unique quality which still overrides the apparently devastating incongruity of presenting four-hundred-year old plays from a foreign culture, written in an archaic form of English, to young people in the classrooms and lecture theatres of contemporary Africa (46).

The need for reassurance about Shakespeare's unique greatness, in a conclusion which ultimately ignores the processes of entrenchment that Wright has detailed, ultimately subverts material conditions in favour of a diffuse, unnameable "unique quality". This seems curious at the tail end of a piece which has worked hard to naturalise Shakespeare's worth to Africa. But this defensiveness is typical of some of the white academics who have allied themselves with a liberal humanist tradition in speaking for Shakespeare in South Africa in these terms. Perhaps it reflects the strength of the feeling of being unjustly implicated in what Wright calls "a vast Western conspiracy of racism and exploitation".[6]

[6] See, for example, Guy Butler's defensive editorial on the founding of the Shakespeare Society: "Some believe this is neither the time nor the place to be founding a society to encourage the appreciation of a dramatist who was born in a foreign land over four hundred years ago… South Africa has more urgent matters to attend to. It certainly has; but that does not mean that long-term interests must be neglected. There are occasions when urgent matters may properly benefit from our attending to matters of permanent importance" (1987: v). The apparently apolitical liberal ideology objects to the appropriation of "Shakespeare" for overtly political ends. See, for example, Houliston, 1989: 69.

There is a history of South Africans finding uses for Shakespeare. This is clear in critical and creative works which respond to, rely on, or utilise Shakespeare as a body of texts, as indicative of educational status and ability, and as symbolically useful (Gray, 1997).[7] Es'kia Mphahlele's vision of "The literature of the English speaking people in South Africa, as the literature of blacks" (103) begins with Caliban as an image of defiance (Mphahlele, 1984a). Can Themba's identification of Elizabethan England with the energetic life of Sophiatown operates as a vehicle for political satire as well as wry cultural comment (Themba, 1963; see chapter five).

Mazrui claims an even bigger debt to the Western literary canon than this harnessing of familiar imagery and invocation of cultural weight, and he is useful to South Africans speaking for an African acceptance of Western literary traditions. Myrtle Hooper, in "Canonisation in Context: Metaphysical Poetry at a 'Black University' ", quotes Mazrui thus:

> [I]n some important sense, African nationalism has literary origins. The liberal arts in schools played their part in giving shape to ideas. The English language afforded access to new intellectual interests. The early cultural associations started the tradition of organized political disputation. But it is in the nature of nationalism to be inhibited in acknowledging a debt to foreign inspiration. Shakespeare stands for a Western literary tradition. Africans can respect Shakespeare as a Western genius - but Africa can only rarely acknowledge him as an African inspiration (qtd Hooper, 1990: 161-2).[8]

Similarly, Wright says, "All the major literary figures of modern Africa have used the technology of the book to become intellectual citizens of the world. They have mixed what has been gleaned from diverse, non-African sources with their own heritage and inspiration, to plough something new back into the soil of Africa" (1990: 280). This is a very fecund and hopeful notion, but it overlooks the complex power dynamics inherent in

[7] Plaatje's Mhudi and translations of The Comedy of Errors and Julius Caesar are also examples. His translations of Othello, The Merchant of Venice, Much Ado About Nothing, and "at least part of" Romeo and Juliet have survived in fragments (Couzens, 1988: 64). See chapter four.

[8] In The Anglo-African Commonwealth, Mazrui is also clear about the importance of the Anglo element to what he sees as the Anglo-African Commonwealth. Writing in 1967, he points to the importance of the British fellowship that ties Commonwealth countries together: "[I]n the ultimate analysis, what could a New Zealander have in common with a Jamaican or a Zambian if not the bonds of a shared British-ness?" (1967: 40-1).

this process of "mixing". The process of seeding the intellectual soil of Africa through Western education was intended to be a one-way process.[9]

Mazrui does go on, in his later work, to challenge the role of the African university as a colonial institution: "The same educational institutions that have produced nationalists eager to end colonial rule... have also perpetuated cultural colonialism" (1984: 275). The two positions - speaking for the presence of Shakespeare in African political and cultural history, and displaying an awareness of colonial conditions - are not contradictory. Rather, it is the terms in which each position has tended to be explored that are problematically antithetical. The relationship between African cultures and "Shakespeare" *both* illustrates complex historical processes of oppression and exploitation, *and* allows for a sense of achievement in what Africans achieved under the conditions which were imposed upon them. It is only when an argument for the celebration of an "African Shakespeare" overlooks conditions of production by subsuming itself in traditional liberal-humanist terms, that a problematic is generated which is theoretical, moral, and political.

Wright draws on Mazrui's chapter on "Shakespeare in African Political Thought" in order to lay some of the foundations of his arguments for an African use of Shakespeare, and the choice of Mazrui as a pro-Shakespeare African theorist is understandable. Mazrui, too, ultimately relies on the universal applicability of Shakespeare's work, and the concomitant deification of the historical figure. Mazrui writes from within the African humanist tradition Chanaiwa finds so implicated in the colonial education practices that he argues delayed the achievement of political freedom (1980; see chapter one). In this context, then, Mazrui gives Shakespeare two identities, one specific, and the other universal: "the master of the English language" and "the great creator of human characters and eternal situations" (1967: 108). The eliding of terms such as "the English language", and universal "human characters and eternal situations" which makes

[9] During a lecture given to the National Geographic Society, London, c.August 1998, Arundati Roy was asked if she saw her Booker Prize-winning novel The God of Small Things as a tribute to the Raj. She

Englishness the embodiment of Humanness, is an instance of a problematic, colonially-inflected humanism in action. In the acceptance of Shakespeare as (English) spokesman of the essentially and eternally human, Mazrui can be seen to be confirming the terms of Chanaiwa's critique.

However, Mazrui is also aware of how Shakespeare operates as a symbol, something with use-value to Africans. The way in which this awareness is expressed locates Mazrui historically and philosophically. Mazrui differentiates between an African Shakespeare for exhibitionists - those who would display their acquisition of Western culture - and those who really understand "him" (1967: 109). This demonstration of historical and cultural processes is partially overridden by the premise that Shakespeare is a universal genius. The important fact that Shakespeare did influence African cultural and political thought is inflected in a way which endorses the problematically liberal humanist Shakespeare of a colonial English literary tradition. At the time of writing (1967), post-colonial theoretical imperatives to reconceptualise resistance had not yet been comprehensively formalised. It is thus perhaps not surprising that what interests me here - the use to which Africans put Shakespeare politically - is subsumed by what becomes a demonstration of Shakespeare's genius, in "his" ability to appeal to Africans.

Mazrui's deference to the logic of a humanist Shakespeare manifests in his quoting Plato to show that English literary education is politically efficacious (to some extent a circular argument, using Western tradition to validate itself), and culminates in a discussion of a pamphlet of Nyerere's, who quotes "lines directly from Shakespeare" (113). Finally, he ends the chapter by quoting Shakespeare to illustrate why Shakespeare is both integral to the development of African nationalism, and unacknowledged as such (120). The logic of Shakespeare's universalism is thus solipsistically self-generating.

For Mazrui, Shakespeare stands for English literary education as a whole (107). In his

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replied that was like calling the child of a rape a tribute to the rapist. This reminds us that the intentions behind cultural imperialism were not as benign as they were presented by colonial discourse.

mapping of the development of English literary education in the Western Cape, David Johnson also takes Shakespeare to be "representative of English studies" and on the basis of this assertion goes on to write about the history of Shakespeare studies as the history of English studies in the region (1996: 6; see also Harley, 1991).

Johnson locates four related positions on the social function of literature in nineteenth-century writings which mark the beginning of English studies in South Africa. He classifies these positions as: the missionary position ("literature as a proselytizing aid and occasional substitute for the scriptures"); the utilitarian position (literature "as something of limited use-value in the emergent capitalist social order"); the romantic position (literature "as a repository of profound spiritual truths"); and the imperial position (literature "as a means of constructing and securing British identity") (1996: 14).

The steps of Johnson's argument illustrate that the terms of an enquiry which wants to demonstrate an awareness of the colonial conditions under which English literature grew can be, if not as politically problematic as a traditionally liberal humanist enquiry, at least theoretically weak. Rather than offering a comprehensive historical analysis of the foundation of Shakespeare studies in South Africa as Shakespeare and South Africa sets out to do, the book is hampered by its author's desire to reiterate a political position.

One example is the tension between an awareness of the processes of English nationalism which fed colonialism as an enterprise, and a need to construct a Shakespeare who would truly be able to speak to South Africans previously oppressed by such an enterprise. Thus Johnson want to have his Shakespeare and eat it, too: if Shakespeare is monolithically a tool of colonial and apartheid oppression, then how, and why, should "he" speak to oppressed South Africans?

Equally, "the conservative late romantic/ imperial commitment" to forging a connection between canonical artists and the idea of nation that is developed in nineteenth-century England, is replicated in South Africa in the search for a South African canon. As part of

the problem of such an enterprise, Johnson objects to what he sees as the false unity of the concept of the "nation", which in reality excludes a number of disempowered and disenfranchised groups (39). Yet Johnson concludes his book with the hope that it "will be incorporated within a reformulated version of English studies, and read as a contribution towards the forging of a 'People's English' " (213). What is "a People's English" in the context of the multiple, often entwined, linguistic and cultural formations of South Africa? Despite his founding objection to the false unity which underlies the concept of the "nation", Johnson supports the notion of "the People" of South Africa.

Shakespeare and South Africa also raises the questions: what can one reasonably expect of Shakespearean texts, and of the teachers of Shakespearean texts? In his examination of "Minorities against English Studies", Johnson suggests that the presence of minority groups within the discipline "has no necessary connection with the collective improvement of their constituencies", as though lecturing in an English department should necessarily have the potential to improve people's access to water and housing. As Lynda Palazzo says of the issues manifesting themselves in South African English education, "The real educational debate is... what literary education can reasonably hope to achieve" (1990: 280). The educational debate needs to be located in clear relation to the political issues raised by the exigencies of pre- and, indeed, "post-" apartheid. Only in this way can the potential of education to effect social change be managed.

In a series of Clarendon lectures, Stanley Fish outlines why, in his opinion, literary criticism can never bring about political change (1995). His argument is in some ways compelling: in order to claim existence as a discipline, any enterprise must have its own professional boundaries, must have a way of knowing "what it is we do around here". The definition of "what it is we do around here" relies on a certain amount of self-referentiality. Outsiders to a discipline cannot speak about that discipline's internal structures, rules, or meanings, because by definition they are not talking about the thing itself if they are outside it. Accordingly, Fish says, when literary criticism "does" politics, it ceases to be literary criticism and becomes something else. When a literary critic does

not make the question, "What does this literary text mean?" central to her analysis, she is no longer practising literary criticism.

Fish makes use of historical arguments to draw out the ways in which the "purpose" of literature and, accordingly, of literary criticism, has changed, and why literary criticism cannot and should not, as the "new historicists and cultural materialists" claim, cross boundaries, push for interdisciplinarity, and ultimately influence and affect the realm of the political (see chapter three). Fish outlines how Renaissance poets could and did carve for themselves spheres of influence politically, using their literature as a medium for political gain. He contrasts this state of affairs with his perception of the modern positioning of the poet: "who *cares* what poets do" today (35)?

Fish concludes that it is not a coincidence that those who study the Renaissance call for a redefinition of the boundaries of literary criticism:

> Turning the clock back would not be the preferred self-description of those who call today for a more interventionary literary scholarship; but it is no accident that such calls often issue from scholars who work in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and who have argued, persuasively in my view, for an Elizabethan-Jacobean culture in which the boundaries between the literary and the non-literary are permeable. What is curious is that the insights of these scholars into the material conditions which made intervention possible and even inescapable in the period they study have not been matched by a recognition that these conditions no longer exist and a realisation that their return cannot be willed either by an individual or by the collective of a gathered practice... Criticism can "claim" anything it likes; it can claim to be a cure for the common cold; but making good on its claims will depend on forces it cannot muster, never mind control (37-9).

Fish's assertion that the "conditions no longer exist" which would afford practitioners of the "literary" to intervene in the "non-literary" makes an important point about the difference between speaking and doing. However, his assumption that the boundaries between the literary and the non-literary are no longer "permeable", runs the risk of sounding like the traditional humanist separation of culture and politics. While he is (in my opinion, problematically) refusing a Foucaultian understanding of the relationship between discourse, knowledge, and power, he nevertheless is seeking to provide a reality check to some of the grand claims for social revolution through the practice of new

historicist or cultural materialist criticisms which characterised especially the earlier criticism. (Arguably, the earlier scholarship functioned as a kind of call-to-arms, and, since what was at stake, via Shakespeare studies specifically, was a notion of nationhood and of national history, the sense critics had of engaging in a debate with important implications, over hotly contested ground, was not as self-inflated as Fish suggests[10]).

While Fish convincingly demonstrates that there are theoretical complications in the development of a politically committed literary criticism, objections to the radical developments in literary theory can easily sound politically naïve at best (similar to the humanist claim that literary criticism is an ideologically "pure" activity) or politically reactionary at worst. Fish's view of the socio-political impotence of literature today and the concomitant grandiosity of literary criticism's claims to political intervention can be contrasted with another set of Clarendon lectures. In Ngugi wa Thiong'o's publication of his 1996 lectures, Penpoints, Gunpoints, and Dreams: Towards a Critical Theory of the Arts and the State in Africa, he explores precisely the vexed interrelationship between art and the state (1998). Ngugi details how the African artist has often been seen as a threat to the regime s/he is living under, and how the production of literature can have enormous political and social power for individual communities. Ngugi locates his discussions of the role and potential power of art within the context of the effects of global capitalism on the development of the state in Africa.

[10] Attempts to push disciplinary boundaries into the broader arena of cultural politics have tended to engender hostility from critics who object to the politicised nature of such a project, and to the concomitant tone that sometimes accompanies the need to push for change: "Everything, it seems, can be explained in political, ideological terms; no text or writer is exempt... Those who do not agree or subscribe are accused of 'ideological blurring' "; in criticism that seeks politically-aware eclecticism is "another form of dominance - a rank provincialism that replaces one culture of reading and writing with another. It does not, as suggested, provide plurality, but... dogmatism" (Kooy, 2000: 476). Wright believes that literary critics will only "do" sociology or politics badly and dent their own credentials in the process. Furthermore, attempts to politicise South African students through teaching literature in the context of other developments might have the "educational consequence... of generations of 'literature' majors burdened with naïve notions about the nature of the African crisis...[T]his kind of problem is characteristic... of *all* undergraduate literary studies where the demands of interdisciplinarity are taken seriously" (1990: 45). Ian Glenn suggests, in the context of English-speaking South African universities' attempts to locate themselves in 1980s South Africa, that it is the process of struggle itself which produces symbolic value, and furthermore, that "[t]he academic belief in academic power to assign or deny value is the virtual equivalent of believing that babies are brought by storks" (1984: 21; 22).

Ngugi speaks as an African activist who is also an African writer and critic, and his positioning powerfully contrasts with Fish's. This is especially clear when, in the course of his argument, Fish briefly mentions Milton's view of censorship: that a work of literature, once it is actualised into the public realm, should be policed by the state. Words have the same "potency" as actions in Milton's world (36), whereas today poets are insulated from politics, and from political agency. Fish's understanding of the powerlessness of the poet is clearly Western, and has an altogether different application when contextualised by censorship in South Africa under the apartheid regime, or by Ngugi's experience of imprisonment and exile. In both South Africa and Kenya, it is clearly not the case that no one "*cares* what poets do" today.

But there is a difference between poets and literary critics. For John Joughin, the disjunction between academic practice and political efficacy is clear. At the same time, Joughin insists that rehearsing the failure of "old aesthetic sensibilities" (by this he presumably is referring to the anti-humanist arguments which inform so much of the radical theory against which Fish is reacting) is no longer enough (1997: 270).[11] Joughin critiques radical theory, embodied for him in cultural materialism because his focus is Britain, for replacing " 'political' activity" with the ultimately empty and often grandiose gesture of defiance which "disaffiliation from the established literary tradition" came to represent (275). The "fetishisation of struggle" becomes "an impoverished substitute for the real thing" (288). From this perspective, if the generating energy of radical criticism came partly from its disaffiliation from literary tradition, it needs the literary tradition it decries in order to exist.

The problem may have less to do with bad faith or intention, than with the theoretical history of academic radicalism. Aijaz Ahmad has offered a comprehensive account of the development of literary theory and its relation to its parent, literary criticism. He points out that radical theories often rely on pieces of abstracted, Marxist-inflected thought, taken out of the context of the whole system, and applied in a kind of discontinuous,

patchwork logic: "[E]clecticism of theoretical and political positions is the common ground on which radical literary theory is... constructed" (Ahmad, 1992: 5). The result is that the class practices and systemic implications of the institutional sites from which radical theory issues are overlooked by the theory itself. Jonathan Dollimore, too, denotes a practice that is not intellectually thorough enough, a shifting collection of ideas spliced together, as "wishful theory" (1998: 269). In addition, Ahmad notes the difficulties of being simultaneously a theorist and an activist, suggesting that the generation of academic theorists who produced radical theory is committed to youthful ideals, without any experience of the realities of the processes of political action (66). Thus it may be that radical intention, as belonging to a tradition of academic thought, is better suited to remaining mere intention.

Perhaps another way into the question of the relationship between literary study and politics is the notion of relevance. The terms of Wright's liberal defence raise the spectre of relevance he is trying to lay to rest by the invocation of a unique Shakespearean quality to justify "the apparently devastating incongruity of presenting four-hundred-year old plays from a foreign culture, written in an archaic form of English, to young people in the classrooms and lecture theatres of contemporary Africa". It is perhaps more pointedly raised by Ngugi's definition of the "quest for relevance" as "the search for a liberating perspective within which to see ourselves clearly in relationship to ourselves and to other selves in the universe" (1986: 87).

Anton van der Hoven eschews the very notion of relevance, arguing that what is relevant shifts according to the always-changing nature of culture: "[T]here is no meta-language in which we can define what is relevant" and furthermore, to "put one's faith in such a language" is to risk entrenching an instrument of domination (1986: 115). While he insists on the need to "always ask the question of relevance", van der Hoven's conclusion echoes Said's notion of a shared "human heritage" of great cultural texts (an idea which relies on a humanist understanding of culture). Van der Hoven, like Said, refuses a sense

[11] Ahmad calls "the danger of embourgeoisement" the most "fundamental and constant" threat faced by

of cultural or human apartheid, a logic of delineation, which would be necessary to identify "relevant" texts:

> [W]hat we need most... is a persistent negative disciplining..., which must always ask the question of relevance, and always refuse to give it a final answer... Should our syllabuses not play their small part in convincing people that the world is, in the first instance, a place to be lived in and shared equally with others? (117).[12]

The complications that arise from an insistence on delineation - on who owns what - are especially apposite to a discussion of the status of English as a language in Southern Africa. While Mphahlele finds in English the language of liberation, Ngugi has detailed how, for him, just as "The bullet was the means of physical subjugation" in colonial Kenya, so "Language was the means of spiritual subjugation". English is centrally implicated in the colonial project: "the night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and the blackboard" (1986: 9).[13] He goes on to detail the cultural functions of a language, in order to illustrate the effects of colonially-imposed languages. This process Ngugi names "colonial alienation", which amounts to forcing Ngugi's colonised child to view his world through an imposed culture (17). Ngugi characterises African literature in European languages as belonging to the petty-bourgeoisie "born in the colonial schools and universities" (20. See Sole, 2001). Ngugi asserts that access to English gave this class both political power and their own identity, in terms of which they could define themselves, and went on to identify falsely the African majority (21-2). The issues of class identity and political power are taken up in chapters four, five, and six below.

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academic radicalism (1992: 65).

[12] The question of relevance has a long history in South African English departments, and can be traced to debates about the inclusion of Southern African and African texts in the syllabus, as well as arguments over how these texts should be taught. Unsurprisingly, both sets of discussions were politically inflected. Some of the results of these debates are reflected in South African journals in the 1980s, and are manifest as an opposition between the moral and aesthetic aims of practical criticism, and what may be broadly classed as a Marxist criticism which sought to locate South African English departments in their historical and political reality. In 1984 Critical Arts brought out an "English Studies in Transition" issue, which was reprinted in October 1986, suggesting that two years later the issues were still topical.

[13] See also Ngugi's in-depth discussion of the relations between languages in an imperial context (1993: 30-41).

Wole Ogundele, in response to Ngugi's "unsympathetic review of the controversy over the language of modern African literature" in Decolonising the Mind, says that modern African literature could never have avoided European languages (1995: 114). Referring to the work of Benedict Anderson in Imagined Communities (1991), Ogundele links modern African literature to the development of the modern African state, which is a product of colonialism. Furthermore, the literature relies on a shared, European, language, which was as important a part of nationalism as the territory in question. Thus "cultural identity could only be truly 'national' if expressed in that language" (115), and exists in a relationship of tension with traditional communities, what Ogundele calls *natios*. Ultimately, true "authenticity" (called into being as national authenticity by invoking the *natio*, a tactic sometimes used by nationalist writers) is irrecoverable. The African nation-states with which theorists have to work are the "consolidated legacy of nationalism" (130) and hence of colonialism. Any notion of the ownership of languages or of texts is complicated by this awareness.

Graham Pechey discusses English in South Africa within the "singularities in the force field of South African politics that will always resist the totalisations either of grand theory or of grand history, areas of communal micropolitics unamenable to any macropolitical subsumation" (1994: 155). His characterisation of the English-speaking community fits well with Kirkwood's, discussed in the Introduction above, and Johnson's, discussed in chapter six below. Pechey notes the "appearance of innocence amidst manifold wickedness" that accrued to English as a language, due in part to the political ascendancy of Afrikaner nationalism (158). English is also the language of "universal (discursive) eloquence":

> Its status is rather like that of Latin in early modern Europe, in that most of those who communicate in it speak some other tongue at home, and most of these users can also read. Fluency in English is virtually synonymous with literacy in a context where orality still determines the consciousness of millions... Speaking English is for many rather like modulating from the spontaneity of everyday speech to that quasi-dramatic expository mode in which one explains oneself to an outsider. Writing it as the medium of poems and novels and plays is for many South African writers a difficult act of translation into a language that

> none the less presents itself to her or him as the necessary language of making oneself heard by an alien audience. For the African majority English is the "natural" means of "secondary resistance"... English commits even its would-be nativist users to ends which cannot be other than culturally hybrid and politically modern (158).

For Pechey, then, English is both politically ambivalent when attached to its economically dominant settler community, and the language of South African hybridity. In this formulation, English facilitates understanding in ways similar to those explored by Mphahlele.

What is clear is that English as a language in South Africa is multivalent: historically, politically, and linguistically. As Viswanathan suggests, there is no simple causal path from the past to the present; use complicates conditions of origin. Furthermore, the political has always been embedded in literary studies, since its inception as a discipline. To speak of Shakespeare in the South African education system is to speak into a complex network of (political, historical, and linguistic) issues.

Shakespeare has been used by South Africans in a range of ways. The theoretical use of radical Anglo-American Shakespeare studies within the academy; a South African Shakespeare who was part of a set of tactics for self-determination and resistance to colonial and formal apartheid practices; and a problematic liberal humanist "European" Shakespeare will be explored in the course of this thesis. As Fish suggests, there is a limitation on political action within the framework of literary theory per se. Nonetheless an important history of colonial mobilisations of Shakespeare, as a cornerstone of formal English literary study, needs to be acknowledged. The kind of humanist practices embedded in these mobilisations must not be repeated. Most importantly, it is possible to assert that English language and literature have an African component that is no less real or actualised for being born out of a system of colonial oppression.

It is in the notion of hybridity that the future of English studies in South Africa lies. While "hybridity" itself is perhaps by now too problematised a term for easy invocation,

the central idea it embodies can be reformulated, as Bill Ashcroft has recently done, as transformation. Like Ngugi, Ashcroft confirms "that to have a language is to have a particular kind of world, a world that is simply not communicable in any other language". However, Ashcroft goes on to demonstrate that, instead of understanding language solely as that which transformed the colonised, it is imperative to allow for the "transformable" nature of language itself. Only then is it possible to formulate a "theory of transformation" (2001: 59).

It is my contention in this thesis that a theory of transformation is possible, and indeed necessary, in order to account not only for a history of oppression and destruction in which English literature as a discipline is implicated, but also to account for the powerful and creative responses from South Africans, which in themselves give birth to new possibilities for English as a South African language. At the same time, the historical genesis of English literature cannot be wished away by love and appreciation, and the possibilities inherent in a South African use of Shakespeare (as the primary embodiment of the treasures of the language) must be tempered by a proper theoretical investigation of the aggregation of values and actions that have come to be designated "Shakespeare". There is a tradition of South African literary scholarship which has begun this work. However, it displays many of the theoretical faultlines of its parent theoretical tradition, Anglo-American radical Shakespearean literary theory. The following chapter will provide a brief overview of the Anglo-American traditions, and of the South African scholarship that utilises this theory.

Chapter 3
Radical Shakespeare scholarship: An overview

Paradigms cannot be avoided; they can only be replaced
(Taylor, 1989: 372).

Can Shakespeare, even a radical Shakespeare, be useful to South Africa? Kate Chedgzoy's Shakespeare's Queer Children begins with an Introduction entitled "This island's mine", the name of a play by Philip Osment (1995). The speaker of these words in the play is a "young black man from Hackney, recently the victim of a queer-bashing at the hands of the Metropolitan Police". Chedgzoy asks, "What right does the 'I' that speaks here have to claim these words - let alone this island - as his own, and whom does he represent?... who may speak of/ for Shakespeare? And for/to whom may Shakespeare be made to speak?" (1). An English academic, feminist and queer rights advocate, Chedgzoy details the "appropriation of Shakespeare's cultural authority" that is represented by This Island's Mine, which

> insist[s] that the history and culture of this island, which Caliban shares with the play's audience as much as with its other characters, are... composed of, and belong to, the diverse voices of the exiled, marginal, dispossessed and oppositional individuals who populate it (2).

Such a statement points to and speaks for the position of minority groups in Britain, "this island". An appropriation of Shakespeare in the form of The Tempest makes a particular statement about access to cultural authority and identity (and thus to social and political rights) for people living, writing, working, protesting from within England. Shakespeare is immediately recognisable as the English national Bard. Thus the right to speak "his" words is also the right to claim access to British national identity, and to the rights afforded all citizens by virtue of their joint membership of the nation. Through this use of Shakespeare, Chedgzoy and Osment are presenting an English man who is also young, gay, black, and working class, and making a point about who qualifies as being English.

The history of the establishment of English literary studies, with Shakespeare as a key figure in the development of Eng. Lit., creates a different set of possibilities for South African writers, workers, protesters who might want to reappropriate Shakespeare's words and cultural authority. Chedgzoy believes that

> Shakespeare is not the exclusive possession of any one social group or cultural formation, but has provided an enabling and empowering resource which has allowed "other" voices to make themselves heard, to stake a claim to cultural centrality, often in the face of those forces which would consign them to internal exile (2).

The ways in which Shakespeare's cultural authority and texts enabled the writing of South Africans is the subject of chapters four, five, and the last third of chapter six. The question of whether radical Shakespeare criticism provided an "enabling and empowering resource" to South African academics is explored in this chapter.

Radical Shakespeare scholarship, as defined in chapter one, relies in part on opposing the "humanist Shakespeare" developed through an Arnoldian notion of culture; as part of a nationalist agenda; and by colonial education practices which entrenched "him" as the best the English could offer, and therefore as the best there was to offer. This "humanist Shakespeare" played a formative role in the development of English literary studies as a discipline, partially through the universalising of particularly English material conditions and concerns in order to facilitate colonial control - Mnthali's "elegance of deceit". English literary criticism also drew on a notion of the unified human subject which encoded white male subjectivity as universal, and which occluded the socio-economic history of the development of the European bourgeoisie. The objections of radical Anglo-American scholars to this humanist Shakespeare are understandable in their context, which encompasses the political developments (and frustrations) of America and Britain in the late 1970s and 1980s. The professional imperative for innovation within academia, especially for what was then a younger generation newly entering the university circuit, is an additional contextual framework for the tone of their earlier work.

However, the leftist political ideologies which inform radical Shakespeare scholarship can themselves be classed as "liberal", in the sense that they are concerned with engineering change in wider social systems in order to facilitate the human rights of the individual subject. They are informed by material histories of identity formation, and by post-structuralist understandings of the endlessly-deferred self. Radical Shakespeare scholars oppose liberal humanism because of what they see as its hypocrisy; because it promises a better world for human beings and does not deliver; and because it uses this promise to entrench class, race and gender privilege. By extension, therefore, some of these scholars would like to see Shakespeare used in the service of a society more committed to what we may, in a South African context, call human rights for all. Can this scholarship then ever really escape a humanist Shakespeare?

This chapter will begin by briefly overviewing some of the theoretical issues raised by Anglo-American radical Shakespearean scholarship, in order to frame a discussion of how this tradition was used in South Africa. I hope to point out that, as politically and theoretically important as I believe radical scholarship to be, it has not managed to escape entirely the humanist terms it so vigorously opposes. The inability to manufacture a complete break from humanism as an informing tradition of English literary study is due in part to the continuities that exist between the different strands of thought in literary criticism. In chapter one I addressed the fact that changes in literary criticism which developed in opposition or reaction to each other, still tend to draw on each other. Perhaps this is inevitable within any discipline, where present lines of enquiry always develop in relation to past ideas, and to present ruling ideologies.

What amounts to a theoretical contradiction - the disavowal of humanist terms of inquiry with the concomitant reinscription of some of those terms - is manifest in what I call South African radical Shakespeare scholarship. The inability to avoid a humanist logic - that is, a logic which ultimately relies on a Shakespeare who expresses universal, and unitary, meaning - is not necessarily politically problematic, in the context of a scholarship which is self-consciously located within the anti-apartheid movement. What

does become problematic, however, are the terms in which this scholarship is expressed, when an anti-humanist invective (which includes the rejection of universal and unitary meaning) is imported from Anglo-American scholarship and applied indiscriminately to all "other" South African Shakespeare scholarship.

Opposing a Tyrannical Shakespeare

Michael Bristol comments:

> Shakespeare enters into the consciousness of everyone in the culture, whether or not they have read any of the plays. We understand Shakespeare as subjects that have already been Shakespearized... There is thus something aberrant in conceiving the notion of a critique of Shakespeare, since such a notion implies that Shakespeare might be something to become emancipated from rather than something to be emancipated by. This very fact, the tyranny of Shakespeare's goodness, is an indication of just how powerfully situated this material is within the ensemble of social and cultural relations in contemporary society (1990: 5).

Shakespeare's position at the top of the cultural food chain and the reasons for "his" success have been examined by literary, textual, and cultural critics. There is agreement amongst a number of Anglo-American critics that Shakespeare traditionally stood for a politically conservative, class-inflected notion of "culture" which has its roots in a humanist project based on invisibly politicised assumptions about universal values. "Shakespeare" is recognised as a multi-layered industry which incorporates and includes universities, schools, theatres, the advertising industry, research libraries, popular culture, tourism, the media, film, as well as other apparatuses of capitalism. The reasons for this entrenchment are not "natural" proof of "his" universality, but, in the most radical accounts, are implicated in programmes of political, nationalist, economic, colonial, and cultural control. One example of a critical project concerned with explicating these ideas is The Shakespeare Myth (Holderness, 1988). In that volume John Drakakis links the obfuscation of the construction of culture to the naturalising of inequitable social relations in Britain; and David Margolis shows how Shakespeare's plays present, represent, and reproduce a ruling-class view of the world which is naturalised. Simon Shepherd uses the various and variant spellings of Shakespeare's name to enforce tacitly the point that

"Shakespeare" is a construction, and Derek Longhurst discusses how " 'Shakespeare', although largely appropriated in the present century by national institutions of education and interlocking cultural institutions, is not *essentially* and transhistorically the blockbuster of bourgeois culture and dominant ideology" (1988: 71).[1]

Nevertheless, many critics working within Anglo-American academe in the last three decades reiterate the historically conservative use of Shakespeare. Leah Marcus suggests that editing, the activity upon which Shakespeare's textual authority is based, is conservative by nature, possibly because of the levels of erudition required by the activity (1996: 5). The gentlemanly activity of educational attainment which produced many of Shakespeare's earlier editors is thus implicated, in all its class privilege and establishment-endorsing politics, in the founding of what Bristol calls "Shakespeare as an institutional reality" (1990: 2), and what Terence Hawkes denotes "Bardbiz" (1992: 141). Margreta de Grazia provides an account of the construction of Shakespeare's textual authority in the eighteenth century. In her study of the Shakespearean editorial tradition, she argues that "the apparatus enclosing Shakespeare in the late eighteenth century provided sanction... for the unique study of Shakespeare" in the centuries that followed, and details how the impetus for this apparatus partly derived from a conservative political and cultural agenda (1991: 10).

Hawkes also sees Shakespeare as having been invoked for conservative purposes: "Shakespeare is a powerful ideological weapon, always available in periods of crisis, and used according to the exigencies of the time to resolve crucial areas of indeterminacy" (1986: 68). He illustrates this use of Shakespeare in Britain, in relation to the world wars and the Falklands, and finds that Shakespeare has been mobilised very effectively to enforce the status quo. "As a central feature of the discipline we call 'English' his plays form part of that discipline's commitment - since 1870 in a national system of education - to the preservation and reinforcement of what is seen as a 'natural' order of things" (*ibid*).

[1] See also Sinfield & Dollimore, 1985; Longhurst, 1982; Drakakis, 1985; Barker, 1986. For a feminist-inflected application of some of the theoretical and political issues raised by the radical scholarship explored in these collections, see Erickson, 1991.

He describes some of the ways in which the institution of Shakespeare depends on inequitable economic and social relations. Hawkes finds an irreconcilable "contradiction" (19) in the cultural mobilisations of Shakespeare in England and the material conditions of the working class which enabled these mobilisations (1986).[2] Elsewhere, he writes that Shakespeare's "image speaks to and fosters a number of powerful prejudices" enforced by education and "transmitted through a kind of unlearned, unofficial folk-lore" (1996: 1).

Gary Taylor's overview of the history of Shakespearean textual, literary, and dramatic interpretations implies that the institutionalisation of Shakespeare was facilitated by a conservative political agenda. He suggests that the development and establishment of Shakespeare as a cultural icon were linked to royalist politics and the protection of social privilege from the Restoration onwards (1989: 120-1). In the eighteenth century the defense of political and social privilege was justified as a defense of English culture, and Shakespeare was invoked to represent this culture (148-9). Like Marcus and de Grazia, Taylor finds that the early editorial tradition of Shakespeare took an intrinsically conservative form (130). The sense that dominant English culture since the Restoration has always been inherently conservative is strong in Taylor's book; perhaps all ruling power is conservative, but it seems from this reading that Shakespeare was mobilised and co-opted immediately and inevitably by an unprogressive, defensive status quo.

Bristol accounts for Shakespeare's ongoing cultural authority in America by critiquing what he calls "the 'sacred character' of the Shakespearean scripture" (1990: 19). He offers a sustained analogy of the industry of Shakespeare studies as a quasi-religious movement which relies on a spurious notion of tradition (37-61). Tradition, in the true sense, no longer exists in late-capitalist America:

> tradition... is replaced by a system of institutions that conserve and administer a massive fund of intellectual capital. The values sedimented in art and literature become a type of wealth "without qualities"... and

[2] See "Swisser Swatter: Making a Man of English Letters" in the same volume for an exploration of the politics of making history and the use of Shakespeare.

> available for accumulation... Accumulation of artistic and intellectual capital takes the place of tradition as a source of authority (59).

Bristol also links the development of formal literary education, which he says was based on Shakespeare, with conservative politics (79-80). The development of this industry has resulted in an American Shakespeare who is firmly Establishment, constituted by a specific "constellation of interests" which include the large private collections that are now research libraries, and which have in-built, political-cultural agendas and the power to shape research agendas accordingly, "important government agencies,... a consortium of universities, and... private industry and finance" (88).

In response to the political and educational conservatism which, by these accounts, seems to have informed the teaching and the criticism of Shakespeare from the inception of English literary studies, a number of critical challenges have been mounted from within the humanities in the last three decades. Differently inflected, sometimes aligned, sometimes in disagreement, the different critical strands can be classed as America's new historicism, England's cultural materialism, feminism, and post-colonial theories (always allowing for the fact that these delineations are sometimes artificial, and that a critical response can incorporate a combination of these strands of thought - as, indeed, this thesis hopes to).[3] All have a particular relationship to Shakespeare studies, although the first two schools of thought concentrate on Renaissance studies, and particularly Shakespeare's texts and cultural manifestations. The sense of a Shakespeare historically invoked by proponents of conservative political agendas is one of the constructions against which this radical scholarship reacted, and helps to account in part for its sometimes vigorously oppositional energy.

[3] Ania Loomba offers an overview of the until recently conspicuous absence of "Empire, race, colonialism and cultural difference" in Shakespeare studies (1996: 165).

New historicism and cultural materialism

New historicism and cultural materialism are related critical strands, concerned with analysing and challenging cultural formations of power relations, with "[g]etting to grips with what our inherited notions of 'right' conceal from us" (Hawkes, 1996: 15). Part of this work involves pointing out the politics behind liberal humanism as it has been manifest in English literary studies, and how Shakespeare's texts have related to this project. In addition, by offering alternative thematic and structural readings to those provided by humanist readings, new historicists and cultural materialists use Shakespeare's texts to point to textual and materialist issues in the texts and their contexts. Shakespeare's texts are thus used for positive illustrations of these radical methods as much as they are proof of the misuses of humanism as it informed the development of English literary studies.

Much has been written about new historicism as a critical practice, with insightful critiques appearing both in journals and as chapters in book collections.[4] The tenets of new historicism's British sibling, cultural materialism, have also formally been laid out in critical collections.[5] Jonathan Dollimore characterises cultural materialism, following Raymond Williams, as being primarily concerned with cultural analysis (and self-

[4] For an overview of the development, and an analysis of the proponents, of new historicism, see Mullaney, 1996. For a critical overview see Dollimore, 1985. Jean E. Howard also offers an account of new historicism (1986). James Holstun, while supporting the politicisation of literature that new historicism popularised, critiques the use of non-literary texts as contextualisations for canonical texts, and the "tendency to claim a premature totalization of early modern culture" (192) based on these canonical texts. Holstun also critiques theoretical issues in new historicism, such as its dependency on Foucaultian notions of power (1989: 192).

[5] Political Shakespeare is subtitled "New essays in cultural materialism", and Dollimore's introduction addresses this approach and its relation to new historicism. Examples of cultural materialist practice abound in many of the books mentioned in the footnotes above. The Shakespeare Myth, with its concern with contemporary British cultural politics, as well as the relationship between culture and politics, is representative of the kind of practice to which cultural materialism lends itself, although the collection does not directly claim that school of thought for itself. Don E. Wayne, a self-identified new historicist, discusses the differences and similarities between the American and the British criticisms (Howard & O'Connor, 1987: 60). Wayne critiques Political Shakespeare for not adequately accounting for the differences between American and British radical criticism, and explicates "a fundamental discontinuity between the work of British and American scholars" (51) which he sees as characteristic of most of the criticism produced in the twentieth century. A more recent collection, concerned specifically with Britain, addresses cultural

proclaimed cultural materialist texts are concerned with contemporary cultural politics), whereas new historicism is seen to be primarily concerned with the operations of power in the Renaissance. Both kinds of criticism seek to complicate a trans-historical use of early modern texts in the name of universal values.

As part of his overview of the American academic industry, Bristol addresses new historicism through the figure of one of its major proponents, Stephen Greenblatt:

> The importance of [Greenblatt's] work is not that it is a "good interpretation" of Shakespeare or a "correct interpretation" of the Renaissance. Greenblatt is an extremely sensitive reader whose scholarship very acutely registers certain very deep rifts and contradictions in our cultural dispensation (209).

It is important to note that, within this assessment of Greenblatt's work, humanist terms still have a place. The critic is sensitive and reflective; in this case his heightened awareness works not only for his personal development and expanded awareness, but for a more general socio-cultural awareness as well. The terms of the discourse against which new historicism initially emerged, and which helped to define the Shakespeare with which new historicism is engaged, are still powerfully present.

Radical Renaissance criticism has been critiqued for using historical scholarship as a vehicle for its own political agendas, in a way which distorts the various texts of history at its disposal. By the mid-nineties those scholars who had been fighting for a more overtly political (or politically aware) criticism had assumed positions in universities:

> Once the exhilaration of sheer innovation had subsided, the challenge was to devise a theory and method which would retain the specificity of literary study while at the same time working toward a complex understanding of the relationship between texts and their originating moments. Work in the Renaissance now claimed to be reading not only texts but history, relocating texts within an anthropology of culture (McLuskie, 1995: 416).

McLuskie finds that this "theory and method" continued to reveal an uneasy tension between the findings of historical research, and radical critics' need to locate early

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materialism specifically, calling the movement to task for its inability to live up to its promise of political change (Joughin, 1997).

modern England as a time of crisis (418-21). Despite the literary critical tendency to transpose contemporary political anxieties onto the past, McLuskie is ultimately in favour of the literary critic reading historical texts, because history, in the last instance, "is simply available for reading... [I]t is... [the] indeterminacy [of]... the textuality of history... which liberates the textual critic to a position of all-embracing control" (424).

However, a major risk is that a criticism that wants to be radically new, and politically emancipatory, can end up being as conservatively emphatic and as intellectually compromised as the paradigm it seeks to challenge. This risk is especially present if the new scholarship is using "history" as a political tool in much the same way as did the humanist-inflected early literary scholarship, which is blamed for silently subordinating historical analysis to an ideological imperative.

Given the silently gendered nature of humanism as explored in chapter one, it is not co-incidental that one of the most discussed problems with new historicism has been its relationship to another powerful radical force within Renaissance scholarship. At the same time as new historicism and cultural materialism were gathering force, Carol Thomas Neely objected:

> In spite of all that the new theoretical discourses seem to have in common with feminist criticism, in spite of their appropriation of some of its claims, their effect - not necessarily a deliberate... one - has been to oppress women, repress sexuality, and subordinate gender issues. All of the topoi of the new approaches: the historicity and intertextuality of texts; the constriction of history to power, politics, and ideology; the denial of unity, autonomy, and identity in authors, subjects, texts; the displacement from women to woman to sexual difference to textuality; the view of man/ woman as just one more in an outmoded, interchangeable parade of binary oppositions, have the effect of putting woman in her customary place... - the same old master plot. In it, women continue to be marginalized, erased, displaced, allegorized... The new approaches are not new enough (1988: 7).

The strength of feeling generated by the arguments between new historicism (where new historicism came to stand for cultural materialist practices broadly) and feminism played itself out in journals and conferences in the 1980s. David Bevington provides a map of

the places of agreement and conflict between feminism and new historicism in these forums, as well as in various books published by proponents of both schools:

> We have all been absorbed, fascinated, and made anxious by the debate over the issue as to whether New Historicism deserved (and still deserves) to be called a kind of male club in which the roles of women in the Renaissance, and of feminist critics in the present, were... occluded (1995: 310).

He goes on to suggest ways in which new historicism and feminism can work together, and illustrates the fruitful work that has been produced by critics who combine what the two methods have to offer. He ends with a call to avoid binarism, and asks that critics apply the " 'negotiations' and the 'circulation of social energy' (Stephen Greenblatt's useful terms)" to their ("our") own work, "and in the way that work participates in the history of our own times" (319). Such a coalition is possible, and indeed successful; there are feminist essays in new historicist collections. However, feminist contributions to new historicism sometimes seem to be at risk of tokenism.[6]

Thus radical Anglo-American criticism is partially reactive, often oppositional, and in many ways brought a new emphasis to literary criticism of early modern texts. At the same time, it is not altogether "new", although its practitioners' need to present it as such may be the result of a complicated mixture of political imperative and institutional pressures. Despite radical scholarship's commitment to being politically responsible at least, and emancipatory at most, it contains within itself a sometimes problematic relation to feminist concerns; a sometimes problematic use of historical scholarship; and the continued presence of a humanist logic in its driving concern to address the effects of systems of inequality. The humanist-inflected manifestations of, especially, this last

[6] Feminism has been represented within the many collections of what Dollimore calls "materialist criticism" (1985: 4). Political Shakespeare contains an essay by Kathleen McLuskie, "The Patriarchal Bard: feminist criticism and Shakespeare: *King Lear* and *Measure for Measure*". Shakespeare and the Question of Theory, which contains essays on deconstruction, as well as chapters by new historicist-associated scholars such as Greenblatt and cultural materialist-associated scholars such as Hawkes, has a section dedicated to "The Woman's Part" (Parker & Hartman, 1990). Both volumes of Alternative Shakespeares contain essays on sexuality or sexual difference (Catherine Belsey and Jacqueline Rose in the first collection, and Belsey and Bruce R. Smith in the second - roughly ten percent of the contributions). Peter Erickson uses the intersections of new historicism and feminism as his theoretical starting point in Rewriting Shakespeare, Rewriting Ourselves (1991).

concern are clearly revealed by an examination of the ways in which Anglo-American radical scholarship has been taken up by South African critics.

Radical criticism in South Africa

Perhaps it is not surprising that the radical uses to which Shakespeare has been put in South Africa have not succeeded in fulfilling their own theoretical agendas, although they express important anti-apartheid politics. Despite (perhaps because of) several attempts to apply the theoretical logic used by Anglo-American scholarship, and despite the many useful opportunities presented by post-colonial theoretical innovations, radical South African Shakespeare scholarship remains fraught with theoretical problems. This is in part due to the centrality of humanism to a politics concerned with achieving not only a change of political power, but also a recognition of universal human dignity and equality (that is to say, a culture of human rights) in a country where the majority of the people suffered centuries of oppression and exploitation, and in part due to the historical processes by which South Africa came to inherit Shakespeare in the first place.

There is no intrinsic historical reason why Shakespeare's texts should be made to speak to South African issues of race and class outside of the colonial system which entrenched Shakespeare as the paragon of literature. Thus South African criticism which tries to mimic cultural materialist practices often ends up revealing the gaps in its own theoretical assumptions, as will be discussed below. One of these assumptions is that Shakespeare can and does speak to all South Africans, because after all, "he" does express the essentially human in all of us. Rather than allowing the exploration of how Shakespeare has been manifest as a tool of the status quo to raise the question of Shakespeare's appropriateness for the South African struggle, this criticism wants to offer a corrective, "correct", reading of what is ultimately still a humanist Shakespeare.[7] This is one of the

[7] An argument can be made for Shakespeare's role in the development of a resistant South African writing in English, as I do in the following chapters. The point here is rather that South African radical criticism does not engage with this question, preferring to assume a radical humanist Shakespeare in the place of what it designates a liberal humanist Shakespeare, without working through these terms as I have tried to do

same weaknesses for which a liberal humanist use of Shakespeare is criticised: its refusal to acknowledge the constructed nature of an apparently universal Shakespeare (see chapter two).

In the examples discussed below, Martin Orkin and David Johnson offer accounts of the history of the uses and abuses of Shakespeare in South Africa. Both books embody explicit protests against the humanist use of Shakespeare in the context of sustained and formalised oppression. For Orkin, post-colonialism became an important framework within which to work, and he went on to address the issues raised in his book in a number of articles and essays.

In Shakespeare Against Apartheid (1987), Orkin offers a corrective reading of three of the tragedies, to counter the Shakespeare presented by the apartheid education system. Orkin's Shakespeare is as historically transcendent as the liberal humanist creation against which he objects, but a Shakespeare against apartheid embodies a correct universal morality whose politics Orkin can endorse.

Accordingly, utilising the transcendental historicism which makes Shakespeare applicable to all contexts, Hamlet's Denmark, Elizabethan (and Jacobean) England, and apartheid South Africa in the 1980s are seamlessly compared. Othello is seen to be commenting on white South Africa's ruling class savagery, its hypocrisy, and its construction of the Other. King Lear explores a political system of domination based on land ownership, where justice and power are inextricable. This recognition allows for the play to be used to comment on contemporary South African political, judicial, and economic systems.

Orkin hopes that his Shakespeare will produce revolutionary students, "those prepared to 'take arms against a sea of troubles' " (52) rather than the submissive, apathetic products of the education system whose inability to resist the state contributes to the perpetuation of moral and political evil. Orkin may be trying to harness Shakespeare's authority to the

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in chapter one. The result is a criticism which is at times virulently oppositional to a mode of thinking on

anti-apartheid struggle, which is in itself a most laudable use of such authority. In the process, however, he reinscribes exactly the all-knowing, universal genius he says is invoked by the state to silence and control. Furthermore, the difference between the apartheid state's dehumanising policies (the construction of racial difference which underlay the practices of "separate development" and which denied the existence of a common humanity); and the (albeit problematic) humanism which underlies political and philosophical liberalism in South Africa is effaced. (For an examination of liberalism in South Africa, see chapter six). A humanist Shakespeare in South Africa can operate as an opponent of apartheid precisely because of the universal human values "he" can be made to espouse - as, indeed, Orkin's book makes clear.

There is no obvious or necessary cultural or historical connection between Elizabethan and Jacobean England and 1980s South Africa, and Orkin does not establish or create one. In what may be an implicit attempt to assert the possibility of a "People's Shakespeare", he assumes that Shakespeare will, and should, speak to (young, black) South Africans:

> [T]he young men and women in Soweto and elsewhere in South Africa, who know they are living in a system which is less than just, despite its official claims, will recognise many aspects of the situation depicted in *Hamlet*. They will respond to the unease we may detect in the text about the workings of state power within the social order... Furthermore, if they themselves care about justice they will understand Hamlet's anger at a society that compromises with injustice, and they will share his agony at the problem of finding the proper action that will at last realise that justice... Not all such men and women may be interested in Shakespeare, but the experience of *Hamlet* is in their blood (54).

There is no reason why Shakespeare in particular should be used to generate this empathy in young South Africans. Indeed, by using Shakespeare to authorise South African writers, Orkin demonstrates that there is a body of local writing which addresses the reality of life in South Africa. As one example, Orkin's young, black South Africans

> will also know, distressingly, that the "pain of living" is often the pain of a Horatio, who at the end of the play understands, as does Sipho Sepamla, that

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which it itself to an extent relies.

> it is more and more frequently the dead who must be praised. They, most of all, have cared and because they have challenged injustice they have died (54).

If Orkin's point is that students need a literature which will speak to their experiences of injustice and struggle, why should young black South Africans read Hamlet, if they can read Sepamla? Of course, in the 1980s, youth in the education system and outside of it would not have had easy access to struggle writing, while at least the former would regularly encounter Shakespeare. If Orkin wants to invoke Shakespeare's authority to speak against apartheid, the anachronism that results is arguably politically justifiable. Nevertheless, in enacting a political and, especially for its time and place, a radical agenda, Orkin recreates "Shakespeare", only this time in his own image instead of the state's. The contradictions in this Shakespeare come from an emphasis on "his" commitment to human rights, while he is being used to criticise apartheid education policies, which themselves assume a universal Shakespeare. At the same time, this authoritarian, apartheid Shakespeare is made to be coterminous with the hypocrisies of South African English liberalism, as represented by Shakespeare critics in South African universities. Two quite different philosophies are thus yoked together, in order to prove that Shakespeare has been misrepresented in South Africa.

Orkin ends his book with the wish for "a people's Shakespeare". In order to achieve this, he wants "a struggle to wrest the Shakespeare text from the conservative grasp of traditionalist critics" in order to "free [the texts] from ruling class appropriation, from their present function as instruments of hegemony" (184). While this makes sense insofar as Orkin objects to a Shakespeare who "help[s] *apartheid*" (182) (although it conflates Afrikaner nationalism and "traditionalist critics", at least some of whom would identify as anti-apartheid in their liberalism), it does not really address the question of why we should want a people's Shakespeare in the first place. If Shakespeare has been a hegemonic tool, and if South African texts that reflect *South African* experiences exist, then why struggle to free Shakespeare from the ruling class? Why not simply reject him in favour of a more familiar, less ideologically-laden literature? The notion of a Shakespeare against apartheid, who wrote texts which discuss oppression, is still reliant

on the notion of Shakespeare which assumes "his" universal applicability. Thus the political and cultural systems which entrenched a universal Shakespeare, resulting in Shakespeare's presence in the education syllabuses of colonial, and then apartheid South Africa, are never addressed. In fact, their assumptions are implicitly endorsed by Orkin. The act of writing a Shakespeare against apartheid is a political, moral, oppositional, emancipatory act. However, the theoretical contradictions are far more difficult to support than the political intention.

In the same tradition as Shakespeare Against Apartheid, Johnson asserts that his historical account of the use of Shakespeare in the Western Cape education system "reflect[s] the urgency of struggle". While his Afterword was written post-independence, Johnson still finds "much to struggle *for*, much to be angry *about*, in the institutions and practices of English studies in post 1994 South Africa" (212). Since, he says, the history of Shakespeare in the education system can be assumed to be the same as the institution of English Studies in South Africa, and considering South Africa's high illiteracy rates,

> To continue gazing to Oxbridge and Columbia for intellectual inspiration, and to continue teaching Shakespeare as before to relatively small numbers of students, seems particularly unlikely to make a positive impression on these statistics, on these entrenched patterns of exclusion (213).

Despite his hope for "a 'People's English' " (213) which, according to the logic of the project must be at least on some level the same thing as a "People's Shakespeare", Johnson ends his book with another hope, that his mainly isiXhosa-speaking students

> might come to see support for the view that their "failures" with Shakespeare are part of much larger histories of imperial violence, in which the Bard plays a central and deeply compromised role (214).

If Shakespeare is centrally implicated in histories of imperial violence, and if Shakespeare stands for English studies, then how can we assume that a "People's English" is even desired by "The People" (the problematic homogeny of such a concept notwithstanding)? Of course, English in South Africa is in fact a much larger and more multivalent entity than "Shakespeare". The point is that, while decrying an abusive and belittling cultural-

political system whose roots are humanist as much as they are colonial, Johnson reinscribes an all-powerful, all-representative Shakespeare.

Furthermore, there is a contradiction embedded in the radical South African project to critique the use of Shakespeare in the education system. Shakespeare is cast as a powerful tool of the regime, inflicted on thousands of children as an ideological weapon. At the same time, there is an increasing problem with access to education, the result of neo-colonial conditions of which apartheid was one aspect. Shakespeare has been problematically implicated in an oppressive education system, functioning as an effective state weapon of control to help perpetuate an inequitable system. At the same time, "he" has also been unfairly denied to Africans, which emphasises the inequities of the same oppressive education system. For Johnson, the lack of access to Shakespeare is as problematic as "his" presence on syllabi. In Post-colonial Shakespeares, Johnson states that the World Bank's policies, with their emphasis on science and vocational training "threaten[...] Shakespeare's survival in post-colonial Africa" (1998: 230). He points out in a footnote that in the 1930s, the number of Africans in secondary schooling (and therefore with access to Shakespeare) was small; now, as then, "A vast majority of Africans in former colonies therefore continue to remain outside Shakespeare's universe" (234). If this is so, then why should they strive to enter it? Especially if "Shakespeare's universe" is historically imbricated with the neo-colonial universe which allows the World Bank to have the power to dictate pernicious economic policies? (See also Johnson, 2001: 7).

This may not necessarily be shakespeare's fault - scare quotes or otherwise.

Johnson concludes, "Despite promising gestures, the post-modern Shakespeare continues to marginalise Africa" (1998: 228). The question of the relationship between post-modernism and post-colonialism is indeed crucial, as is the performance of post-colonial theory in universities in relation to the realities of neo-colonialism. But can the inherited notion of "Shakespeare", even a post-modern, or a post-colonial Shakespeare, in fairness be expected to do anything other than marginalise "Africa"? (Although "Africa" is a continent's worth of histories and cultures, which cannot be described as a unit.) Johnson

finds that "the post-modern Shakespeare indeed echoes the silences of colonial Shakespeare", because the former does not address contemporaneous neo-colonial conditions of the majority of people in the Third World (228). Is it reasonable to expect Shakespeare to be an African, or a Third World, activist? In South Africa, the relationship between cultural forms, current economic realities, globalisation, and the effects on the "everyday" culture of the majority of South Africans has been well teased out by Kelwyn Sole (2001b), and does not include any direct mention of Shakespeare. It may be that Shakespeare does not play as important a role in modern everyday South African, "African", or "Third World" culture, as those of us who study Shakespeare would like to think.

Johnson ends this chapter with a call to remember the world beyond the academy, and with the suggestion that placing post-colonial Shakespeare in correct historical context will release "a more troubled and critical Shakespeare study." The question of origin - the question of why, in South Africa today, we should want or need a more troubled and critical Shakespeare study in order to address oppression and suffering in the lives of South Africans - is not answered. Instead, what is advocated is a continuation of the oppositional methodologies of resistance criticism begun with the mobilisation of a Shakespeare against apartheid.

It is difficult to escape the universalising implications of a humanist Shakespeare. Grounded in an anti-apartheid political agenda which seeks to reveal the cultural implications of colonial education practices, is a sense of common humanity which legitimates the struggle against oppression. Furthermore, what both Orkin's and Johnson's books reveal is that Shakespeare in South African education has a problematic lineage. If their arguments are accepted wholesale, the way the texts are taught, as well as the reasons for which they are taught, are inimical to South African students' moral, intellectual, and political well-being. The assumption that we in South Africa should continue teaching Shakespeare to our students then becomes difficult to sustain. Nevertheless, both critics do seem to assume that Shakespeare is, and should be, an important part of a South African education system.

Aesthetics aside, one reason to continue teaching Shakespeare in South Africa is the value of "his" global cultural capital. Another reason is the role that Shakespeare has played in the development of writing in English in the region, as will be discussed in the following two chapters. But if the question of Shakespeare's appropriateness is not explicitly addressed, and in terms other than those that invoke the "commonsensical" assumption that "he" does just speak to and for all humanity, then these apparently common-sensical terms are reinscribed. If we assume without question that Shakespeare should be reclaimed for the radical critical tradition, then we are assuming the terms of the historical and cultural systems we are questioning in the first place. The fractures within the Anglo-American radical criticisms become more pronounced when the methods of radical criticism are imported into South Africa, precisely because our anti-apartheid imperative makes explicit the need to commit ourselves to a notion of universal political and human suffrage, even as our colonial history makes the artificiality of Shakespeare's status as universal bard inescapable.

Post-Colonial South African Shakespeare

A further theoretical development which must be addressed in the context of South African Shakespearean scholarship is post-colonial theory, since post-colonialism has become the framework for the most recent radical South African Shakespearean scholarship. "Post-colonial" is a contested term, as a label and as a concept (Slemon, 1996; Griffiths, 1996; McClintock, 1994; Johnson, 1996: 105-10). It is also difficult to assume a vocabulary with which to talk about Shakespeare and post-coloniality since there are implicit problems in focusing on one of the most hegemonic European constructs in the name of post-colonial studies. Nevertheless, the development of a set of related discourses which seek to understand how colonialism has shaped the material and conceptual spaces that currently exist has resulted in theoretical concepts that have been useful to some radical South African Shakespeare critics.

Post-colonial theory has had to face charges that it has become a space for diasporic academics in metropolitan centres, at the expense of the actual geographic areas of post-coloniality it seeks to describe. Arif Dirlik contends that post-colonial theory was created when "Third World" academics consolidated positions in "First World" universities (1994). He goes on to suggest that post-colonial theory obscures the means of its own production, including its dependence on global capitalism, often failing to highlight current important socio-political issues. Wole Ogundele addresses another debate behind Dirlik's accusations:

> Anxiety about the possible eventual ineffectuality of postcoloniality can already be detected in the accusations that Western academic establishments and theories... are trying to domesticate – and therefore deradicalize – it. The threat is real, more so because postcoloniality's reading strategies, even when applied solely to texts from postcolonial cultures, shine more light on the "center" than the "margins" (1995: 112).

Accordingly, concerns about postcoloniality's co-option include that it overwrites current material conditions of oppression, and imbalances in global economic and political power. In addition, it reinscribes European theory and thought (or European dominance and modes of thinking) at precisely the point at which colonised writers were beginning to have a recognisable and powerful space into which to speak in their own (ambivalent, hybrid, but emerging) voices (King, 1996). The charge that some post-colonial work has ignored literature produced by writers from the "periphery" in favour of mining the works of established metropolitan authors (in many cases precisely those authors who were used to develop and assert cultural imperialism) is an urgent one in post-colonial discourse theory.

Thus the need to hear the voice of the subaltern becomes a crucial project, and a key question is how to allow "Africa" to speak to the "West" about "Shakespeare". The scare quotes are my addition to this formulation because, despite the emphasis on locality in this particular project, the constructions of the opposing monoliths are sometimes not interrogated. This can be problematic, as will be seen in Orkin's use of Dhlomo to access the African subjectivity of Othello. The concern with finding a way to balance the

knowledges of the post-colonial with those of the metropolitan centres, the need to stress the differences between individual locations in the post-colonial enterprise, and the concern to reformulate the notion of hybridity accordingly, are central to the essays in Post-Colonial Shakespeares, and to the recent work of that book's two editors, Orkin and Ania Loomba.

Loomba has been concerned with challenging what she sees as a totalising notion of hybridity which ignores geographical and cultural specificity, as well as differences within cultures generated by, for example, gender and caste. Such a homogenising "hybridity" is guilty of privileging one element of the hybrid, thus giving the lie to the term itself (1998: 143-7). Rather, Loomba elsewhere advances ways of seeing hybridity as appropriation, as something other than "psychic dislocations between black skins and white masks, and the mimicry of colonial culture by colonised subjects" (1997: 118-9). Through nuanced readings of the ways that Indian film and theatre practices have assimilated Shakespearean influence, Loomba shows how many of the standard tropes of post-colonial theory have simplified cultural relationships of influence and transformation. Thus

> a binary division between colonial and anti-colonial, between "Western" and "indigenous" cultures, is not adequate to understanding any of these cultural phenomena... "post-coloniality" is not an adequate term for understanding the different relationships of different sections of Indian society to colonialism and nationalism. Class, gender and region... religion and caste... profoundly alter the relationships of people to Western culture, colonial education and cultural icons like Shakespeare (1997: 130-38).

These correctives are important. They combat simplifying notions of cultural hybridity and versions of personal identity which overlook categories such as gender in order to privilege racial difference in problematic ways that often reinscribe difference itself. Such a refining project is central to Post-Colonial Shakespeares,[8] and is taken up in more detail in chapter five.

[8] See, for example, Jonathan Burton's reconfiguration of mimicry-as-autoethnography, with hybridity as the resulting strategy (1998: 43-63).

In his recent work on Shakespeare and post-coloniality, Orkin expresses this need to break an oppressive, Western cycle of endlessly conceptualising difference in a way that repeats its othering strategies. Orkin's concern with ownership is clear in many of the titles of his recent work: "Whose popular theatre and performance?" (1992) although not concerned with Shakespeare, marks an earlier example. "Whose things of darkness? Reading/ representing The Tempest in South Africa after April 1994" (1997) follows on from "Re-presenting The Tempest in South Africa (1955-90)" (1993). Most recently, "Whose *Muti* in the Web of It?: Seeking 'Post' - Colonial Shakespeare" (1998b) takes up many of the issues raised in Post-Colonial Shakespeares (1998a).

While the issues of ownership (of the discourse itself, of its informing critical traditions, and of the voices that are constructed as speaking within or towards a condition of post-coloniality) are vital to current post-colonial theories,[9] and to attempts to place Shakespeare's works in any location (as Anglo-American cultural materialists' many discussions of how the Bard has been harnessed to English national identity make clear), what Orkin's oeuvre indicates is that the methods made available by Anglo-American radical criticism cannot be transplanted directly to South African intellectual soil. Loomba's well-theorised and -illustrated examples of counter-appropriation of a Shakespearean influence in different forms of Indian performance suggest the success that results from localising post-colonial theorising. Yet while South African writers have complicated, hybrid, appropriative, empowering relationships with "Shakespeare's" texts and authority, we do not yet have a coherent localised theory to understand and accompany this writing. Such a theory would have to engage with humanism as a politically viable tool of resistance as much as it would have to select carefully the aspects of Anglo-American and post-colonial theory it wished to use.

"Whose *Muti* in the Web of It?" illustrates some of the theoretical dangers of the appropriation model advocated by Loomba. In this article, Orkin links Dhlomo's colonial, hybrid subjectivity to Othello. He does this in order to offer a reading of Othello as a

post-colonial, hybrid subject informed by an African awareness of what such subjectivity might entail, in opposition to Western impositions of meaning onto aspects of Othello's history and identity. However, in striving to inflect his work locally, Orkin creates a generic, pan-African black subject. Orkin's important final question, "Whom is a post-colonial Shakespeare FOR?" (1998b: 30) is substantially lost in a web of contradictory pressures that are manifest within the essay itself.

As part of a project to get beyond the marking and reinscribing of Otherness, Orkin wants to complicate received notions of hybridity, and thereby turn what has traditionally been perceived as Othello's weakness, lack, difference (as exemplified in the various interpretations of his handkerchief), into the weaknesses within Western discourse itself. Lack then can be rewritten as the absence of African voices in this critical tradition and in the ways available to understand Othello. We may be enabled to "read hybridity as indicating a more strongly active move to appropriation and contestation as well as assimilation" (27).

A number of questions are raised by this worthy but problematically enacted project. Despite Orkin's disclaimer that he is not trying to construct a direct link between Shakespeare's text and the Southern African use of muti (28), his formulation begs the question of whether Shakespeare's Othello can ever be an accurate or "authentic" representation of the "African". I do not want to veer into the complex terrain of national identity politics here. Nevertheless, Othello, Western Literature's most famous Moor, is a quintessentially European figure; he has drawn out generations of "Western" critics', actors', and audiences' responses to their black Other. Can we ever hope to access African experience, to reclaim the voice of the historically and culturally oppressed Other, through writings written and/or translated for "Europe"? This point is not meant to deny the usefulness of hybridity as a concept, or to suggest that national boundaries are not, on one level, "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1991). It is not, in other words, to suggest an "authentic" "English" Shakespeare, or to oppose such a creation to something

[9] Issues of ownership could be tied to the centrality, problematic or otherwise, of nationalism in post-

"authentically" "African". But the critical work that has been done on the representation of race on the early modern stage makes it clear that Othello expresses early modern England's complex and contradictory attitude towards its others, and cannot simply be made to represent "Africa's" sense of itself.

The dramatic representation of black characters on the early modern stage has been extensively addressed by a spectrum of literary and social-historical critics. The aesthetic tradition of symbolic colour in medieval and early modern iconography and stage history has been explored (Hunter, 1978; Gillies, 1994; Tokson, 1982; Barthelemy, 1987; Jones, 1965; D'Amico, 1991). Critics have also investigated the political implications of this tradition, rooting it firmly in a developing discourse of racism (Hall, 1996; Loomba, 1992; Tokson, 1982; Newman, 1987; Brown, 1985). There is general critical agreement that Othello's "Moorishness" is a marker of racial and religious difference, and it is from this point that much recent criticism has proceeded, having acknowledged that much of the critical concern with the exact degree of Othello's blackness itself revealed the anxieties of white critics trying to reconcile themselves to the notion of a black tragic hero.[10]

Indeed, a concern with the specifics of race reveals far more about contemporary racial politics than it ever could about Elizabethan and Jacobean notions of race or racism, as the history of the critical reception of Othello makes clear. The term "race" is itself historically contingent. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker point out that "race" was "a highly unstable term" in the early modern period (Hendricks & Parker, 1994: 1; 26). The Elizabethan and Jacobean experiences of racial difference are ultimately unreclaimable, as Lynda E. Boose suggests in her discussion of the ambiguities surrounding the term "race" in the Renaissance (1994: 35-54). It remains politically significant, however, that blackness on the early modern stage acquired a range of negative associations. Qualities associated with blackness include monstrosity, ugliness, lustfulness, duplicity,

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colonial theory and literature. See Ahmad, 1992.

[10] Martin Orkin provides an overview of the racist criticism about the degree of Othello's blackness (1987). See also Echeruo, 1978.

bloodthirstiness, shamelessness, the symbolic weight of darkness and night; and blackness as a link to the devil, "probably the most facile and the most frequently used of all the associations" (Jones, 1965: 29). These associations become available for Shakespeare, and other contemporary dramatists, to use - to challenge as well as endorse. The subject of such a challenge must be the early modern (or, indeed, modern) viewer, and not a performed subjectivity that can straightforwardly be cast as "African", however. Given both the aesthetic-political tradition of blackness on the early modern stage, and the modern critical tradition of investigating this blackness in the name of a post-colonial Shakespearean criticism that to date has been predominantly located in the West, why *should* Othello be made to represent Africanness? Is "he" not more useful, and more honest, as a testimonial to early modern, and ongoing critical, Western understandings of difference, which so often become portraits of racism? Why look to Shakespeare for an African voice? This is not to suggest that there is no connection between African voices and Shakespeare. By locating a transformed Shakespeare in the development of different Indian artforms, Loomba's work illustrates the potential in a reclamatory post-coloniality (although she may not wish to call it by that name). Similarly, the next two chapters will seek to illustrate what we might call a South African connection with Shakespeare. The question here is rather, what kind of theory should we be using to frame this project?

It is clear that Orkin wishes to situate his work within South African society, in order to develop an appropriate theoretic. "Whose *Muti* in the Web of It?" begins with a discussion of how "since 1989 South African theatre... has been in decline" (1998b: 16) due in part to escalating crime which deters the white middle classes from venturing out to the theatres (17-8). Thus Orkin challenges "the implicit assumption or expectation for South African theatre, in putative 'post-colonial' projects, of an unfolding post-colonial narrative of development and vitality" (18). He locates this challenge in a critique of post-colonial theory which, following Ann McClintock, questions "the 'idea of linear, historical "progress" ' which the word 'post' brings with it" (18) (see McClintock, 1994). This allows for further dismantling of the notion of a "post" colonial in South African coloniality, and ultimately leads to the question of how post-colonial theories may,

following Dipesh Chakrabarty, "seek more symmetrical kinds of knowledges, knowledges from the local that can be balanced against that knowledge coming from the West" (18). This concern is carried over into Orkin's work in Post-Colonial Shakespeares (1998a).

It is possible that the links made in this article between concerns for the state of South African theatre and society, Dhlomo, and Othello, indicate an opportunistic use of a South Africanness, an as yet under-utilised commodity. The article is also an attempt to be "genuinely" post-colonial by giving voice to something traditionally spoken *for* in post-colonial and radical Shakespearean criticism. However, in its assumption of something generically "Western" and something generically "African" (including "muti"), in the context of an appeal for attention to local detail, the article fails its own theoretical test. It betrays the same sense of arbitrariness evinced in other South African criticism influenced by cultural materialism and the new historicism: aside from rhetorical flourishes, what is the connection between (what is here explored as) a Zulu medical-traditional practice, the hybrid subjectivity of an early twentieth-century "New African" (however it is formulated), and Othello?

> If... the use of *muti* is in one form or another to be found in most sub-Saharan cultures, the likely experience of a seventeenth-century equivalent of Othello - not only in terms of his travels beyond the confines of Moslem-dominated Barbary, but also because of Barbary's own trade with Africa - would confirm encounters with or links with those African cultural practices (1998b: 28).

This is simply conjectural, and indeed seems to me more historically unlikely than it would be likely, given the evidence that English trade and travel were predominantly located in North Africa, and to a lesser extent in West Africa, in the late sixteenth century. Not only does it compress a whole continent's worth of cultural practices, it utilises the same Western system of imbuing Othello with representational meaning that it is trying to contest. Orkin goes on to say:

> But even if we disregard these arguments, the contemporary significance of *muti* in African cultures is surely at least as useful a model for approaching Othello's language about the origin and meaning of the

> handkerchief as contemporary Western Freudian or Marxist notions of fetishization (*ibid*).

This is a fair point, but what it reveals is precisely the arbitrary nature of the connection. If anything, one could perhaps argue that contemporary Western Freudian or Marxist notions of fetishisation grow more directly out of Shakespeare's early modern English cultural context, and thus have more of a connection with the playtext, than traditional Zulu medicinal practices, if one wanted to establish historical genealogies of this kind. Again, this is not to say that the search for a post-coloniality that works for South Africa, and/or for a South African Shakespeare scholarship, is not worthwhile. Rather, it is to suggest that importing Anglo-American critical practices wholesale in an attempt to fashion a South African radical criticism is theoretically problematic, and highlights precisely the question of Shakespeare's relationship to the South African locale. Part of this difficulty is the vexed inheritance of the colonial uses of Shakespeare in the South African education system.

Orkin's interesting political point about the "need to resist… an Othello who is in one way or another ultimately 'inferior' to the culture in which he finds himself" (28), arrived at by yoking together Dhlomo and Othello, sits as oddly with the ending of the essay as it does with the beginning. If the essay starts with a dismayed assessment of the state of current South African dramaturgy, it ends with what might be read as an alarmist description of the state of Shakespeare in the South African higher education system:

> Recently I attended several Arts Faculty Board meetings… In such a climate, the imperialist Shakespeare or a diasporic or Western global post-colonial Shakespeare… appear all to have little or no chance of survival. This should, presumably, give the Western or diasporic project of a "post-colonial Shakespeare" some pause for thought (30).

Thus Orkin ends his essay by pointing to the discrepancy between material conditions and theoretical ones. By raising material conditions contingent to the location of Shakespeare studies in South Africa, whether these be radical, post-colonial, or neo-liberal-humanist, Orkin's threat of no Shakespeare for South Africa of any description, given as it is as a final thought, points again to his motives for using an early South African playwright in

order to explicate something generically "African" about Othello. Given that the essay begins and ends with a negative impression of the state of South African culture, to whom is the profit to accrue for this use of South Africanness in order to flesh out theoretical points about a post-colonial Shakespeare?

Orkin's work on The Tempest is similarly fuelled by reaction against the South African educational establishment. His anger at conservative appropriations of Shakespeare in the context of what post-colonial theorising might offer South African Shakespearean scholarship at times dominates his writing about this play, to the extent that his political, oppositional stance is in danger of supplanting his argument. This oppositional energy may in part owe its strength of purpose to the Anglo-American criticism from which Orkin develops his theoretical tools. Nevertheless, his anti-humanist pique simplifies the possibilities inherent in humanism in South Africa, and constructs a South African Shakespeare "establishment" which can easily function as a straw man.

Orkin first identifies the assumptions that inform South African criticism of The Tempest, detailing the historical adherence to what he understands to be a typically liberal-humanist tradition that overlooks the developments in post-colonial theory. He suggests that the useful ambiguities in the play are forced into moral resolutions, in a sexist, didactic, and Christian-inflected framework (1993). He finds in South African Shakespeareans a dismaying tendency to conservatism, and a refusal to embrace the emancipatory possibilities inherent in the text:

> Indeed, in present-day South Africa [1993], the necessity for recognising and respecting difference – the readiness to identify complex contradiction, ambivalence and discursive struggle not only in *The Tempest* but beyond it – remains as urgent as ever it was. But it is a sobering experience to discover the enduring critical practice evident in most articles on *The Tempest* in South Africa. Such criticism suggests… the depressingly tenacious staying power of particular habits of mind… [Like settler South Africa], "This place is not wholly governed by wisdom, ability, or elevation of mind. There is a set of ways of thinking and prejudices… which it is worth the while… to study" (Lady Anne Barnard, qtd. Orkin: 53-4).

Orkin's readiness to assume that South African articles on The Tempest are representative of teaching practices across the board is challenged by Alan Brimer in the same volume: "South African English departments have seen themselves and have been seen by others as sites of opposition to the South African state for at least forty years" (1993: 31).

In his contribution to Shakespeare and National Culture, Orkin is concerned with establishing the offensive political credentials of current South African Shakespearean scholarship as his starting point for an analysis of how The Tempest could be made to work for a progressive South African politics. This chapter begins with a criticism of those who support the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa, some of whom, Orkin suggests, are unaware of the liberal agenda they endorse by supporting the society's academic fora (1997: 148). The other starting point to Orkin's argument, which is informed by the article he published in Shakespeare in Southern Africa in 1993, is the argument of Victor Houliston's article on rhetoric in a different volume of the same journal, and what such an argument reveals about "many of the assumptions and practices in South African neo-apartheid education" (1989: 149).[11]

Indeed, Orkin's concern with the state of South African criticism and education post apartheid is indicated in the title of this chapter, "... Reading/ representing *The Tempest* in South Africa after April 1994". He protests against the "large doses" of British literature still in the education system, and the continuation of apparently apolitical aesthetic reading practices as a "disablement and distraction of colonial subjects from any self-awareness or self-understanding", "even after April 1994" (149). The repetition of a specific historical marker, encoding a massive ideological shift as well as, in its break with what came before, an implied fresh start, suggests that Orkin might have expected syllabi and reading practices to change rapidly, in the hope that systems would be

[11] In this article, Houliston is concerned with "a responsible historical approach to teaching Shakespeare" (68). Houliston's emphasis on "respecting the 'otherness' of the past" (*ibid*) would seem to fit well with the anti-humanist imperative informing Orkin's scholarship. However, the article also takes on "the use of history by the so-called 'new historicism', especially as it operates in South Africa", and critiques "its aggrieved and materialist mentality" (69).

dismantled in the space between April and May. The failure to transform quickly is given conspiratorial significance; Orkin finds the emphasis on beauty and truth in the teaching of literature ("the Keats thing") "most sinister" (*ibid*). The victimised colonial subject presented here, stripped by a particular use of literature of any opportunity for "self awareness or self-understanding", is at odds with Orkin's use of Shakespeare to try and reclaim a voice for this colonial subject (such reclamatory work, which includes his exploration of a locally-defined hybridity as a useful tool, spans much of Orkin's oeuvre).

Through an analysis of the possible presentations of characters, as well as of Caliban as a resisting subject, Orkin claims that the play marked for its original audience how "hierarchical and patriarchal readings of 'reality' mask their own violence in power relations" (162). More than that, the play is concerned "not only with subversion of the dominant order but with different kinds of resistance to dominant authority" (162). The text embodies "a site of repeated struggle between conflicting discourses" (163). Therefore, Orkin asserts, The Tempest has been mostly avoided for both performance and study in South Africa. He suggests that post-colonial readings of the play "continue to be of the utmost importance" for South Africans (164), *because* such readings were avoided during apartheid.

The tone of this chapter is different from that of "Whose *Muti*" in a noticeable respect: Orkin's attitude to South African society in the writing of a chapter on what a post-colonial Shakespeare in the form of The Tempest might offer South Africa is still hopeful, even if his opinion of South African Shakespeareans is not. Orkin discusses the commitment to debating the role of culture in the new South Africa embodied in Albie Sachs' controversial paper on the subject (1990). He also speaks of the hope implicit in what at the time of writing were "current endeavours to establish a new South African constitution." Orkin finds a "strong commitment to the establishment of what might be called a human rights culture"; South Africa's "democratic moment has at last begun with a move away from past hegemonies of intolerance" (164). The most important interpretative strategy with regard to The Tempest, then, for South Africans, "in the

context of our fraught history and in the light of present endeavours", is the need to "foreground[...] the discursive struggles" in the play. Indeed, such an activity should continue "for the foreseeable future" and is "more imperative" than locating the play's strategies in its own Jacobean context (164). For Orkin, the emancipatory possibilities in the Shakespeare text echo the emancipatory possibilities in a "new" South Africa, and the commitment to emancipation cannot be faulted. However, theoretically, his suggestions are untenable. A liberal, humanist belief in "what might be called a human rights culture" is invoked in order to justify a wrenching of the play from its own history - the same activity which is denoted as politically problematic by the anti-humanist arguments of radical criticism.

Orkin's commitment to emancipation risks collapsing into what can sound like a commitment to oppositional criticism, especially when the chapter obsessively returns to its original subject:

> [T]he insistent presentation of a complexity that reflects material struggle and relations of power, with the recognition of discursive struggle the text identifies militates against anti-democratic predilections to censorship – discomfiting though this might remain to particular ruling classes and groups of whatever kind (164).

Orkin's moral ground is so high one wonders that he doesn't get a nosebleed. An otherwise interesting essay on a political reading of The Tempest is marred by an almost hysterical tone of disgust against its source concern: how South Africans have misread Shakespeare.

As in "Whose *Muti* in the Web of It", Orkin is concerned in Post-Colonial Shakespeares with redressing the imbalance of knowledges, with returning the Shakespeare gaze to the West (1998a: 186). And as in "Whose things of darkness?", Orkin is concerned

> in present day South Africa,... to ask whether Shakespeare might still be used in ways that are enabling or in a manner that does not merely reproduce and confirm "metropolitan" epistemologies (186).

The status of the qualifier "still" aside (given the main thrust of his other work which would suggest that Shakespeare never has been used in enabling ways in South Africa), this question is in some ways precisely that of this thesis. Using "the Shakespeare text itself",[12] Orkin wants to see "whether we can now use the texts in ways that will work for the encouragement of a greater sense of agency within the South African location" (187). His main argument is that, given that the Shakespeare texts still retain a significant presence in the South African education system, they can be useful to South Africa "in providing possible (amongst other) historical perspectives and frames for our own contemporaneity" once their primacy and previous methods of deployment have been challenged (187).

Post-apartheid South Africa can now have its own "post-colonial Shakespeare", pending a re-working of models of marginality that can accommodate political emancipation with still extant economic apartheid (188). Given this framework, Orkin goes on to address "the problems that confront present-day South African Shakespeareans" (188). Such a consideration allows Orkin to begin with what is by now a recognisable complaint: the new South Africa is not new enough. Citing a 1995 M.A. course outline for teachers offered by the English department of the University of the Witwatersrand, he criticises the proposed course for deferring to the primacy of the author-figure, for couching its only apparently radical offering in "a disarmingly familiar tone of resolved (Western) rationality", for in practice marginalising the development of culture and gender studies, for not addressing the historical and ongoing use of Shakespeare as a cultural weapon, and for not mentioning post-coloniality (189-90). At this point Orkin repeats the assertion, made in Drama and the South African State (1991b: 238), that Shakespeare was taught to black schoolchildren as "a measure designed to impede rather than facilitate acquisition of the [English] language" (1997: 150). In addition, the proposal assumes the existence of a "multi-racial classroom" which is in fact still a fantasy. Thus this course

[12] As recent bibliographic work has indicated (de Grazia, 1991; de Grazia & Stallybrass, 1993; Orgel, 1988, 1991 & 1996; Cloud, 1991; Marcus, 1996; Weimann, 2000), the uncertain ontological status of "the Shakespeare text itself" offers a useful way to dismantle Shakespeare's authority for South African students, in order to engage with processes of canonisation that can be located within colonial history.

proposal is implicated in, following Benita Parry, " '[a]... disciplinary mode of occluding the structure of domination' " (191).

Orkin's ultimate point, that access to unchanged structures will not result in equality and freedom, is a good one to make of the South African higher education system. However, to make it via a dismissive criticism of a proposed course which is clearly trying to effect exactly the kinds of changes he has been demanding, even if it does so in a limited way, suggests that what he requires is a different course - one that he has designed, perhaps. Orkin suggests that we can use the Shakespeare text, because, due to its historical moment of production, it "addresses multiple interactions between peoples and endeavours to engage with cultural difference... many of the issues evident in Shakespeare are still current today" (192). Thus presumably the right kind of course on Shakespeare would start with these issues of cultural difference. My objection is the same as that for the project of Shakespeare Against Apartheid: the contradictory terms of Orkin's argument raise the question: why use Shakespeare, specifically, to do this? The need to reclaim Shakespeare implicit in the assumption that Shakespeare is always relevant reinscribes the universal Shakespeare Orkin blames other Shakespeareans for invoking. The emancipatory possibilities of the humanism that has been a part of Shakespeare studies are overlooked.

The opportunity to discuss the historical construction of difference, and the chance to investigate Shakespeare's role in colonial literary history, noted by Orkin here and elsewhere, are exciting teaching possibilities. I do not disagree in principle with Orkin's hopes for the possible uses of the Shakespeare text in South Africa, or with his rage at its appropriation by agents of state repression, and at the acts of violence which were perpetuated in the name of an idea partly propped up by a colonial Shakespeare. However, it is necessary to nuance the tendency to compress all teaching practices within the apartheid education system, together with what, under the simplistic label "humanism", ignores the role that a philosophy of human rights played in the struggle (see chapter one). Orkin's occasional eruptions of rage against the South African higher

education system come to stand, in his work, for a radical/ post-colonial South African Shakespearean scholarship in ways which trap this scholarship into the oppositional *only*. The main thrust of the work lies in disproving the usefulness of something, rather than in crafting an alternative that is genuinely useful to South Africa. Apparent solutions are imported, resulting in a supposedly South African scholarship that is derivative without being thorough. If you like, it results in a hybridised scholarship which privileges the Anglo-American half of its ideas while claiming legitimacy from its South African half. Indeed, Orkin says:

> To argue that we need to escape the dominance of Europe does not of course mean that current work both in Europe and North America... is anything but helpful. On the contrary, such work feeds into current endeavour in South Africa (1997: 195).

He goes on to make some useful points about what "the Shakespeare text" is capable of transmitting. The text and its history can help us in South Africa to deal with ways of conceptualising and responding to difference; it can facilitate an exploration of our relationships with Europe and North America; it can help us to imagine our own future (197). However, these large and powerful claims raise the question of who "we" are. In this chapter, Orkin offers a very pertinent series of observations about the issues raised by South Africa's multi-lingualism, and the education system (192). There is much to be said about the complex and problematised relationships between language, identity, nation, culture, and history which underlie the ongoing debates about multilingualism in the education system, before we can seriously start to address these radical and emancipatory ways in which Shakespeare might be useful to a significant part of "South Africa." Indeed, Orkin goes on to theorise the potential interlocutory power of the "South African reader of Shakespeare" (198). Who is this person? Is s/he the Establishment Shakespearean from a settler-descendent community largely resisting transformation? The Wits English department lecturer failing to engage properly with a post- modern/ -colonial/ -apartheid Shakespeare? A student teacher on Wits's "inadequate" Shakespeare course? A student in that teacher's not-yet-multi-cultural classroom? The black schoolchild whose experience of Shakespeare acted as an impediment to acquiring English?

Orkin sees in a South African Shakespeare the opportunity to engage with hybridity (201) and resistance (202); he suggests that by using Shakespeare as a South African "other" we can establish our own "centre" (203). These, like the other suggestions, are exciting potential projects, even if they do not answer directly the question of why Shakespeare specifically should be used. The question of how they fit with the history of Shakespeare in South Africa remains, once again, unresolved.

Elsewhere in Post-Colonial Shakespeares, Michael Neill reminds us that the origins of the Anglo-American radical project lie with, and address, British and American needs. Because the "primary 'market' " lies in these metropolitan locations, "we" post-colonial critics writing from the margins who want "success" need to "speak in an accent that is familiar to metropolitan consumers" (169). The language of the marketplace is apposite here, for perhaps one way to understand the theoretical problems that have come out of the radical Shakespearean criticism produced in South Africa from very real and important political concerns with justice and equality, is to see it in terms of exactly the kind of economically-inspired mimicry that Neill suggests.

Like its parent, Anglo-American radical theory, radical South African Shakespeare criticism is radical in its intention, and in its opposition to older structures. However, this is no longer enough. The ideal of propagating a human-rights culture in the classroom and thence in South Africa cannot be made to rest on particular readings of Shakespeare, whose importance to South African culture may be overrated. Furthermore, a commitment to furthering respect for what Noyes calls "the human" (2000) cannot afford simplistically to reject humanism in its entirety.

Radical South African Shakespearean scholarship has articulated the desire to be of use to "the People", and is concerned with addressing oppression within the education system. There is a tradition of South Africans developing a relationship with Shakespeare that is neither oppressive nor, in its class politics, necessarily politically radical, even as it resists colonial and apartheid practices; the case of Plaatje in the following chapter is an

example. In the remaining three chapters I will continue to explore some of the ways in which Shakespeare has been used in South Africa, and to illustrate that while Shakespeare has meant something different to different South Africans, there has never been a "People's Shakespeare" in South Africa.

Chapter 4
South African Shakespeare: Tracing the Trajectory

> She impressed me a great deal. Yes, the dignity of that hotel maid was quite remarkable. Another woman would have thought that her son was bewitched, and taken appropriate measures. She, in her simple way, saw that her son's disease has been brought on by his education. That was why she had come to me, a teacher at the college.
> I asked her to send the boy to me…
> I said to him, "I've listened to you, and I know that one day the mood of despair will go and you will want to act. What you mustn't do then is to become involved in politics as they exist. Those clubs and associations are talking shops, debating societies, where Africans posture for Europeans and hope to pass as evolved. They will eat up your passion and destroy your gifts" (Naipaul, 1979: 132-3).

> Your cattle are gone, my countrymen!
> Go rescue them! Go rescue them!
> Leave the breechloader alone
> And turn to the pen.
> Take paper and ink,
> For that is your shield.
> Your rights are going!
> So pick up your pen,
> Load it, load with ink.
> Sit in your chair,
> Repair not to Hoho,
> But fire with your pen (I. W. W. Citashe, late nineteenth-century Xhosa poet. Qtd A. C. Jordan, 1973: 88).[1]

Helen Tiffin maps the development of post-colonial theory in two main streams, one concerned with the literary texts produced by writers in ex- and neo- colonial states,[2] and one which has its "basis in European philosophy and politics" (1996:161). Radical Shakespeare criticism fits this second "stream" of post-colonial theory. It rarely engages with local literature, and when it does so it is often to make a point about Shakespeare. Tiffin ends her essay with a call to decolonise literary curricula. This

[1] Hoho is the "Mountain-forest stronghold where the Xhosa Chief, Sandile, was shot and killed" (*ibid*).
[2] I will be assuming the following nomenclature: Old or ex-colonies exist in a neo-colonial world, described by a post-colonial discourse, made up of different strands, where the prefix indicates the continuing presence of the neo-colonial in the reality of the ex-colonies.

> would seem to imply...: an interrogation of those profoundly affective English works - their contents as well as their conditions of consumption and production - as well as a radical rereading of their terms, not so much "against the grain" as within their historical and geographical situation(s) - demystifying (while still acknowledging) their power in the contemporary world (162-3).

Tiffin's hesitant initial phrase is telling. What does it mean to decolonise literary curricula? How does one de-canonise a structure established partly in relation to the development of canonisation? Furthermore, the desire to affect the contemporary world is an important impulse in much radical theory, and a founding one for post-colonial theories (even if the practice is often more complex [Dirlik, 1994; Ahmad, 1995; Cooppan, 2000]). But it is a complicated task to demystify the discursive power profoundly affective English works still assert, not least because questions of the ownership of English literature cannot be easily settled. The English literary canon, whatever its origins, forms part of an African literary tradition. The power of English literature is manifest on the level of the individual's personal experiences, and on a broader political level, and the two realms are not separate. That is to say that personal responses are partially constituted by context. It is also to attempt to account for the complex ways in which the symbolic power of English Literature, and of Shakespeare, became available as tools to particular South Africans in the course of the first half of the twentieth century.

This chapter will examine attempts to use this power for indigenous benefit: when the promise of universal humanity (with its implied access to politically entrenched equality) implicit in the colonial, humanist, teaching of English literature was tested. As a political tradition in South Africa, this brand of humanism was found wanting.[3] At the same time,

[3] John Dube, first president of the South African Native National Congress (formed on 8 January 1912, and renamed the African National Congress in 1923) during Plaatje's tenure as the SANNC's first secretary, "announc[ed] his intention as president to place 'hopeful reliance in the sense of common justice and love of freedom so innate in the British character' " (Lodge, 1983: 3). As part of this hope, which stemmed from a belief that they were loyal Imperial subjects and expected to be treated as such, who believed in the Christian humanism they were taught, two delegations were sent to Britain to argue for the Imperial intervention on behalf of the Queen's loyal black South African subjects in 1914 and 1919. Plaatje attended both, and produced Native Life in South Africa while in England during the war, to campaign against the

as part of a literary trajectory, the use of Shakespeare by South Africans that grew out of this humanist tradition became an important strand of a class-based literature of political resistance and of (at least textual) self-fashioning, itself a political act.

Below I trace critical understandings of Solomon Plaatje's use of Shakespeare. I suggest that Plaatje's relationship with Shakespeare as a series of texts to be translated, and as a symbol, can be read in ways which stress his formation of a South African Shakespeare. In addition, Plaatje marks the inception of a use of Shakespeare which has implications for South African writers both personally and politically, although I do not attempt to penetrate beyond textual constructions of identity. Peter Abrahams's autobiography Tell Freedom explicitly engages with the advantages and complications of an education in English Literature, and Shakespeare becomes emblematic of this education. A discussion of Abrahams's construction of English as a language and a literature, and its links to textually-inscribed personal identity for the South African writer, forms a bridge to the following chapter's investigation of Shakespeare in the context of the Drum writers of the 1950s (Abrahams was an occasional writer for Drum; Tell Freedom was serialised in the magazine from April 1954 [Green, 2001: 77]).

I am not going so far as to claim that from Plaatje to the 1950s' Drum generation there is an unbroken heritage, via Abrahams (such a formulation omits H. I. E. Dhlomo, for one). However, there are clearly shared educational and social issues that connect these South African writers who, educated before formal apartheid, can be placed along a trajectory of class, political, and literary concerns. These concerns intersect in particular (and complex) ways, in the uses these writers made of Shakespeare. The writers who make use of Shakespeare in this way can be characterised as an elite in terms of their class position,

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1913 Land Act, to no avail. The political promise of equality with "civilization" turned out to be, in Peter Abrahams' words, "FOR EUROPEANS ONLY" (a refrain that runs throughout Tell Freedom, for example 164). This is not to suggest that the personal journeys undertaken by individuals did not have value; indeed, it is in these personal journeys that the kind of education received through the mission schools helped to shape the identities of South African writers in English, which allowed them to influence South African writing in English.

educational attainment, and numbers, and they mark an important movement in the development of written South African literature:

> [W]ritten [African] literature emerged from the rupture in indigenous cultures caused by the colonial experience. To a certain extent this literature is part of the response to European domination… [and] is often expressed in the tongue and literary forms of European literature, propagated by what is in the beginning a small black elite (Sole, 2001: 143).

Sole points to a number of difficulties in the description of this elite as "petit bourgeois". Members are from diverse social origins, and the sub-class itself can be divided into two different strata ("the 'traditional' petty-bourgeoisie [small-scale producers and small traders]… and the 'new' petty-bourgeoisie [civil servants, non-shareholding managers, teachers, clerks, intellectuals, journalists etc.]"). The unifying feature denoted by the label is ideological rather than economic or social, although education is a vital feature "in the continued existence of this coherent attitude". Furthermore, members of the group occupied a position which was fundamentally unstable, allowing them to cross over to the working class on the one hand if such a move was expedient, and to aspire to bourgeois status on the other hand. Lastly, intellectuals within this class had "special interests" of their own, "which cannot be reduced to the general interests of the class to which they belong"(145-6). Nevertheless, what connects the writers I will be discussing, in addition to the issue of education (which Sole stresses as important[4]), and linked to it, is a particular use of Shakespeare, which itself is linked to education and aspiration, as well as to protest. Despite the difficulties inherent in generalising about the social and economic origins of this group, Sole does conclude that "[b]ecause of historical circumstances… black writing… is largely petty bourgeois in origin" (146).

According to Sole, this " 'repressed elite' " (following Couzens, 149) was increasingly characterised by the tensions caused by their experiences of a particular kind of

[4] "There is a remarkable amount of coherency in this black elite right up until the late 30s" largely as a result of education, which moved from rural-based mission stations to urban church schools with the increasing urbanisation after World War One. "Indeed, right up until 1953 Fort Hare and the church schools produced a great number of leading black intellectuals and politicians", and church schools educated slum dwellers up until their closure in the 1950s (Sole, 2001: 149), of which more in the following chapter.

education, and by a petit-bourgeois class-location, in relation to worsening socio-political oppression (144). Mounting frustration in the face of increasingly oppressive conditions is reflected in the changing content of the writing. The political invocation of Shakespeare is initially oblique. Plaatje hoped to make a case for Setswana through his translations. Can Themba's use of Shakespeare to comment on South African life, on the other hand, is much more overtly political, as will be seen in the following chapter.

Sole provides an overview of the history of "black writing" in South Africa before 1948. He stresses the role of the missionaries in committing the first, Christian, vernacular texts to print from the early 1840s (146-7), a point also made by A. C. Jordan (1973). The reasons for conversion, and for the writing that resulted, were not only religious. From the beginning, education and Christianity were a means for those whose own societies were increasingly fragmenting: "Westernized, missionary-run education was seen as a ladder to better jobs, money and a higher standard of living in the colonial context." Christianity became linked to standard of living as a class-inflected notion. Following Ngugi, Sole asserts that a "middle-class mode of living and behaviour" became a signifier of Christianity (147). Linked to this mode of living and behaviour was the development of a "petty-bourgeois individualism" (145).

The presence of a growing sense of individualism within the petit-bourgeoisie was partially a result of their education which was liberal humanist in inflection, and church-controlled from the 1840s until 1953. The humanist orientation of their education points to another of the contradictions which characterised this group, and ironically contributed towards their burgeoning disillusionment, as their socio-political world increasingly failed to respect the universal humanity, and concomitant human rights, of all men (Sole, 2001; Couzens, 1984 & 1985). In 1925, H. Selby-Msimang in the Umteteli wa Bantu newspaper, "articulates clearly the class-based nature of the black elite's demands":

> As far back as from the time they first came into close contact with Western civilization to this day, the State, speaking generally, has never been solicitous, nor sufficiently generous, in its attitudes towards the regeneration of the Bantu. Missionaries, for the most part, found themselves isolated in the effort to transform Bantu life by a process of

> education and Christianity that it may embrace a higher culture (Qtd Sole, 2001: 149).

Couzens details the role of the liberal, white-sponsored, social clubs in mitigating the increasing militancy which eventually began to accompany this disillusionment (1984 & 1985). However, precisely because education remained a unifying factor in "reproducing the mores and ideology of this privileged class, and education was still church controlled", the state had no point of intervention into black education. The liberal humanism which informed the education of the elite offered them exposure to "views on politics, culture, economics, religion and racism [which]... were formed by a group not identified with the state" (Sole, 2001: 150), and thus offered the opportunity to criticise the state's repressive policies: "often the education they received provided the spark for their discontent". A humanist education, brought by colonialism and teaching that all men are equal, helped to equip a group of black South Africans to become resisting subjects even as it shaped them as colonised subjects.

The literary and class-based trajectory - from Plaatje to the most famous generation of Drum writers - is conceptualised as comprising one embodiment of South African uses of Shakespeare. At the same time as it problematises a particular use of humanism – in the promise of universal human moral and political franchise to black South Africans, during a time of increasing disenfranchisement - this embodiment is humanist insofar as it grows out of the education afforded South Africans by the mission schools, a fact which Peter Abrahams comments on directly. The presence of different kinds of humanisms in this discussion, the tension between liberal-humanist promises to the aspiring petit-bourgeois individual in the context of oppressive socio-political circumstances, and humanism's awareness of human rights abuses, marks the complex heritage of humanism in South Africa. The South African humanism which produced a use of Shakespeare in the name of human dignity and socio-political protest can be contrasted with what may more specifically be called a liberal-humanist South African Shakespeare, which will be the subject of the last chapter.

The South African Shakespeare offered here is constructed within a model which values South African experiences, following the post-colonial call to redress the imbalance of knowledges between the West and the Rest (Loomba & Orkin, 1998). This valuation breaks a false cultural binary which posits "African", colonised culture on one side and "European", high culture on the other, where Shakespeare is an elevating, civilising gift bestowed by the latter on the former. Instead, by emphasising the use that was made of Shakespeare by certain South African writers, it is possible to explore a theoretical model which recognises cultural transformation and resistance.

An important codicil for this initial discussion (more attention will be paid to the concept of hybridity in the following chapter) is the need to take cognisance of Sole's criticism against post-colonial theory as it has been practised in South Africa: "it is typical for local 'post-colonial' critics to slip back into notions of authenticity when dealing with issues of black agency" (1997: 124). In my discussions of Plaatje, and especially of the subject constructed in Abrahams's Tell Freedom, I do not wish to fall into the trap of claiming a Western "presumption about privatised subjectivity" (*ibid*), or to be seen to be falling unreflexively back on problematic liberal-humanist notions of the subject, repeating precisely the kinds of constructions of personhood for which I suggest in this thesis a certain kind of humanism should be held responsible. Rather, I am investigating a discursive construction - of "Shakespeare", and of cultural transformation. By selecting this approach, I signal my awareness of the false unity embedded in notions of "essence", whether that essence is ascribed to personhood, to "blackness", or to a definition of culture which makes possible the fiction of cultural purity. Instead I hope to investigate the construction of the matrix which comes to replace the essential core. The reliance on discursive formulations is not meant to privilege discourse above material conditions. I wish to recognise the "connection of cultural identities and forms of expression to material interests and wider ideological struggles in society" (*ibid*: 139). I do so by emphasising the symbolic power of Shakespeare as text and icon, and by acknowledging a particular use of education and its role in the construction of class-based identity specifically in terms of what Shakespeare may be made to represent.

Starting a textual South African Shakespeare: Solomon Plaatje

Christian humanism in South Africa has a history which predates Sol Plaatje, beginning with the first writings in isiXhosa. Jordan (1973: 37) comments on the centrality of a Christian education for these first writings in South Africa (although he also notes that "the history of the literature of the Southern Africans begins long before these people knew anything about writing and long before the advent of the European" [3]). Couzens reiterates the importance of the mission schools in the establishment of literacy in South Africa before Plaatje's birth, and acknowledges that " 'literature' in South Africa does not begin with writing but has its origins in oral performances – praise-poems, riddles, folk tales, proverbs and so on of pre-literate societies" (1984: 60). Nevertheless, Plaatje has come to represent both a talent of potential, imputed "Shakespearean" quality, and, in the thwarting of what should have been his legacy, an embodiment of racist injustice in the ways in which his talent was overlooked. For these reasons, as well as for his translations of Shakespeare's plays, Plaatje can function as a starting point in the development of a particular use of Shakespeare in South Africa.

Born in what was then the Orange Free State in 1876, Plaatje was a politician, a writer, a linguist, and an activist: "one of South Africa's most important political and literary figures" (Willan, 1996: 1; see also Willan, 1984: 81). His output included five translations of Shakespeare's plays (Couzens & Willan, 1976: 2), of which only two survive, Diphosophoso and Dintshontsho tsa Bo Julius Kesara. Plaatje has been read in a number of ways: as the co-opted native intellectual (Johnson, 1996: 96), and as a representative of the emerging petit-bourgeois African class whose love of Shakespeare becomes a delineating marker of education and civility (Couzens, 1985: 6-18). A third reading is exemplified by Leon De Kock's identification of almost inadvertent Bhabha-ian mimicry which he finds at work in the writings of the mission-educated black elite, including Plaatje (1996: 114). Njabulo Ndebele places Plaatje "firmly... in the genuine history of the struggle for liberation" (1991: 82). Plaatje's use of Shakespeare could also

be theorised as essentially destabilising the notion of the colonial subject,[5] following Helen Tiffin's vision of the colonial Other who takes up the challenge of the binary system and shifts him- or herself from one side to the other, according to the promise of the civilising mission. This movement disrupts "those very hierarchized binaries upon which the ideology of Empire... rests" (1996: 154). However, David Johnson worries that this kind of post-colonial "Plaatje-subject" will come to define Plaatje, "given the cultural authority" of the major Western institutions in which such theory is housed (1996: 109). Whether his use of Shakespeare is viewed as a strategy of disruption (Plaatje challenges the construction of his own "otherness" by proving he can be "the same"), assimilation (Plaatje took what he was given and changed it to his own purpose), or ironic civility (whether he meant to or not, the gap between material conditions and colonial education's humanist discourse served as implicit activist criticism), it is important to allow for a Plaatje who is not fooled into submission by a colonial Shakespeare.

In addition, often inflecting the critical recognition of Plaatje's importance to South African literature is the way in which his appreciation of Shakespeare is seen to legitimate his own importance as an artist and icon (Couzens, 1988: 60-6; Willan, 1984: 82-7; Gray, 1977: 1; Couzens & Willan, 1976: 7-8). Couzens draws an analogy between the artist-man Shakespeare, as product of his time, and the artist-man Plaatje, also as product of his time. Because of this similarity, he suggests, there was a moment in our history, exemplified by and embodied in Plaatje, when we had the chance to connect with a Shakespeare we could genuinely "love" and "contemplate". Plaatje

> was the right man in the right time. He owed Shakespeare a great deal. He would have been too modest to say it himself, but Shakespeare owes him, too. By extending Shakespeare into another language and into new literary forms he was enriching Shakespeare in the process. The moment of Plaatje was a moment in the past. Probably it will never come again. But if it does let us hope we are ready for it (1988: 60; 65).

[5] The strategy of assimilation which disrupts the simple categorisation of coloniser/ colonised can be effective. Loomba has illustrated the possibility of using Shakespeare "as a suitably weighty means through which [to] negotiate [a] future" in her examination of Kathakali drama's adaptation of Shakespeare (Loomba & Orkin, 1998: 163). Schalkwyk and Lapula have been "struck by the way in which Plaatje treats Shakespeare as material to be used and transformed... rather than as an idol to be worshipped" (2000: 16).

Couzens is undertaking a project of restoration, and is justifiably angry that Plaatje's work was undervalued in his own time and for so long afterwards. Inflecting the attempt to recognise Plaatje's importance, however, is the way in which his love and knowledge of Shakespeare, and the cultural implications of this for us in South Africa (where Plaatje becomes a potential, if overlooked, "South African Shakespeare"), legitimate his own importance as an artist and a man who was of significance to South Africa.

In Shakespeare and South Africa, David Johnson uses Plaatje to explore "The Colonial Subject and Shakespeare" (1996: 74-110).[6] He offers four models to explore ways of making sense of "Plaatje's relation with Shakespeare" (75). One of these models allows for an investigation of the possible responses of anti-imperialist writers. Johnson details Fanon's thoughts on the responsibilities and failures of the native bourgeois, and, following Cabral, the effects of cultural imperialism on the members of this class (91-3). He also explores Memmi's commitment to the idea of universal equality (95). In this reading, both Memmi and Plaatje "fall[...] for the same myth of bourgeois freedoms", and the work of both

> brings out the complexities of writing... from a weak defensive position outside the ramparts of Western Culture. The faint cries from within for universal brotherhood echo alternately as genuine messages of conciliation (for Plaatje and Memmi), and as cruel lures to trap the naïve and unwary (for Fanon and Cabral) (95).

Johnson assumes that these writers would understand Plaatje, in his apparent love for Shakespeare, as the co-opted native intellectual, even if "limited qualifications" might be found through which to sympathise with Plaatje's position (96).

Similarly, a Marxist reading, partly via Lenin, might

> throw[...] into sharp relief Sol Plaatje's presumptions regarding an equal place within the Pax Britannica for black South Africans... [and demonstrate] the hollowness of claims made from within English culture regarding the liberty and equality of humankind, claims upon which Plaatje and others had placed great store in their struggles against settler governments... The colonial intellectual of Plaatje's generation is for the

[6] For an acute review of the book, including the section on Plaatje, see Wright (1996).

> most part seen as an agent and apologist for capitalism, a traitor to the African masses... [implicated in] a politics of capitulation (98-101).

Indeed, within this framework of class formation and its relation to race, we can locate one impression of the emerging petit-bourgeois African class to which Plaatje is seen to belong. His love of Shakespeare then becomes a marker of this belonging, because it is a marker of his erudition, as well as his moral and intellectual capacity.

Couzens reads T.D. Mweli Skota's African Yearly Register (to which Plaatje contributed), published in 1930, as expressing the aspirations of the emerging black petit-bourgeois, and as an attempt at self-definition (1985: 6-18).

> The book is also in a sense an appeal. It seems to say, "Look, here is a substantial body of people who have achieved much in terms of Christian and civilised standards - this is what we *are*. Surely we should be accepted?... [W]e can be worthy and able allies" (18).

This is the same message that critics have seen in Plaatje's acts of Shakespearean translation (Willan, 1984: 87-90), in his Native Life in South Africa,[7] in his Sechuana Proverbs (Willan, 1984: 82), and in his journalism (De Kock, 1996: chapter 4; Couzens & Willan, 1974: 4). In Skota's "Preface", an intention similar to one of Plaatje's objectives for the writing of Mhudi ("to interpret to the reading public one phase of 'the back of the Native mind' " [Plaatje, 1975: 17][8]) is espoused:

> For years the world has been wanting to know more about Africa and her people. And Africa, on account of her wonderful mineral wealth, has emerged from the dim background to the forefront of international importance. But little or nothing is known of her people. They are deemed to be savages prone to witchcraft, cannibalism and other vices

[7] Leon de Kock says that in this work, Plaatje "captures the characteristic political ethos of the public, petitioning black voice in the late nineteenth century: acceptance of the infancy/ teenager metaphor, respectful admission of tutelage, and acceptance of gradualism in the process of acquiring political rights under the 'British representative system.' The teleology implicit in this idealistic, comedic narrative [comedic in the "Shakespearean sense", in terms of which a predominant aspect is the resolution of difference in society (202)] foresaw an eventual point of arrival at 'adulthood' in the attainment of 'civilised' status and the concomitant full participation in constitutional government" (1996: 112-3).

[8] In his Introduction to this edition, Couzens comments on Plaatje's concern for "historical perspective. Because of the stranglehold of writing in historical recording and propaganda, and because of white dominance over this medium, the bias of African history has been largely white-orientated. This lies behind Plaatje's statement in his preface" (6).

> credited to barbarians. Even historians are wont to record the worst that is in some of the great Africans they sometimes mention in their books. The result is obvious; young children reading in their schoolbooks that their kings and ancestors were murderers, traitors, etc., are tempted to feel ashamed of their race. In this book the lives of such men as Tshaka, Moshoeshoe, Crowther, Tiyo Soga, Montsioa, Khama and others are portrayed by African contributors, and in each case a genuine historical summary has been given to show, without favour, the qualities of the sons of Africa (Skota qtd. Couzens, 1985: 4).

In a local equivalent of the national African Yearly Register, Couzens finds the same commitment to demonstrating "the qualities of the sons of Africa", in the context of an emerging class fraction. John Mancoe's The Bloemfontein Bantu and Coloured People's Dictionary, published four years later, in 1934, "is a peculiar but characteristic mixture of pleading for rights and equality, [and] pushing of group and class interests". Like Skota, Mancoe's style is "representative of a class" (21; 26). In this kind of writing, then, Couzens locates both an emergent class's attempts at self-fashioning, and a plea for social and political justice based on the demonstration of civilised, Christian, values.

Thus it is precisely Plaatje's, and other members of his emerging class's, location as partially co-opted colonial subjects which allowed for their particular strategies of resistance. The extent to which they did take the promise of "civilisation" at its apparent face value cannot be known with certainty, not least because their self-awareness as split or colonised subjects has been theorised in retrospect. We can access some of the manifestations through which they clearly, and repeatedly, asked the colonial ideology to deliver on its ostensible promise. In this way, following Bill Ashcroft, the interpellated colonial subject can be seen to interpolate colonial discourse in an act of transformative resistance. This act changes "the array of influences exerted by the dominating power" into "tools for expressing a deeply held sense of identity and cultural being" (Ashcroft, 2001: 20). In this instance, the interpellated subject's interpolation, embodied in Plaatje's Shakespearean translations, and in Skota's and Mancoe's attempts to quantify their communities' self-fashioning, failed to ensure justice for black South Africans.

In addition to the political, cultural, and linguistic strategies behind his translations, Plaatje invokes Shakespeare in the course of his other writings. In his contribution to Isaac Gollancz's A Book of Homage to Shakespeare (1916), Plaatje uses Shakespeare to force an acknowledgement of African experience within European terms, and to critique the racism of whites in Europe and America. In "A South African's Homage", Plaatje links, and thus grants equality of status to, "King Edward VII and two great Bechuana Chiefs - Sebele and Bathoeng". Shakespeare is the thread by which he sews these two pieces of royal cloth, one English and one African, together. All died in 1910,

> when Halley's Comet illuminated the Southern Skies... I commenced each obituary with Shakespeare's quotation:
> When beggars die there are no comets seen;
> The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes (Plaatje, 1996: 211).

By using "Shakespeare's quotation" for each obituary, by suggesting that Shakespeare is implicitly appropriate as an epitaph for each of the deceased monarchs, Plaatje is according each leader equal status as a prince. Furthermore, these princes are appropriately addressed in the highest accolades English has to offer. Shakespeare does not differentiate between races in this invocation, Plaatje pointedly suggests; why should colonial governments? Plaatje thus naturalises class within English and African societies, suggesting that princes from both groupings are better understood in terms of their shared relationship to beggars, on the one hand, and to divine right, on the other.

In the conclusion to the same piece, Plaatje again uses Shakespeare to make a point about what Africans share with Europeans. In this case, Shakespeare also becomes a commentator on racism. Thus Plaatje makes use of Shakespeare's familiar universal humanism to point to its lack in his "present age" (*ibid*: 212). At the same time he makes a much more complex point about cultural ownership of Shakespeare, and about ownership of the spiritual values which accrue to the culture signified by Shakespeare. Plaatje comments on depictions of black men in two contemporary films, the pro-Klu Klux Klan "The Birth of a Nation", and a film of the crucifixion in which "the only black man in the mob was Judas Iscariot":

> Shakespeare's dramas, on the other hand, show that nobility and valour, like depravity and cowardice, are not the monopoly of any colour. Shakespeare lived over 300 years ago, but he appears to have had a keen grasp of human character. His description of things seems so inwardly correct that (in spite of our rapid means of communication and facilities for travelling) we of the present age have not yet equalled his acumen (Plaatje, 1996: 212).

Schalkwyk comments on the complexities of Plaatje's modes of address to his different audiences, and how this is reflected in his use of pronouns (1999). Here, Plaatje, writing in London, speaks to an English audience when he denotes himself and his audience as "we of the present age". Plaatje is thus unified with his audience, in their shared appreciation of Shakespeare as well as in their modern cosmopolitanism. This counters typical colonial charges against African subjects of Empire, of barbarism or backwardness. At the same time, Plaatje's allusion to the supposed cosmopolitanism of modern people allows him to critique the ignorance implicit in the racism the West represents in the films to which he refers. Finally, "that some of the stories on which [Shakespeare's] dramas are based find equivalents in African folk-lore" (Plaatje, 1996: 212) points to the "inwardly correct" human core of African folk-lore, in contrast to the inhumane racism of the Western depictions of blacks in the films Plaatje saw, and which distressed him so intensely (441. n. 53).

The failure of Plaatje's attempt to achieve the rights of Africans to full political and social franchise is evident in the passing of the 1913 Land Act and its subsequent long-term effects. Nevertheless, it is important to accord Plaatje the credit he is due as a strategist. As is clear above, Plaatje's political strategy has been noted by many of his critics, although his professed love of Shakespeare has not often been seen to be part of this strategy. Johnson turns his attention to this group of critics, specifically Tim Couzens and Brian Willan, and finds that they characterise Plaatje as "a reasonable black man trapped by impossible contradictions" (1996: 104). He takes these critics to task for themselves believing in Plaatje's Shakespeare. His critique is informed by his own criticism of English liberalism's racism (see chapter six):

> Implicit in the work of these writers is the belief that the English liberal culture of Plaatje's time represented a humane alternative to the more brutal racism of the Transvaal, and further, that Shakespeare offered a route for Plaatje to the world beyond South Africa... The encounter between colonial subject and Shakespeare was therefore more than simply the cultural equivalent of the economic transaction between De Beers Consolidated Mines and the African mineworkers; it was a complicated exchange which *included* certain valued achievements of Western culture becoming available to colonial subjects for the first time (*ibid*).

This comment about De Beers becomes clearer at the end of Johnson's chapter, and embodies his own attitude to Plaatje and Plaatje's relationship with Shakespeare. Johnson offers his version of "The Real Sol Plaatje", in the form of an anecdote "which dramatizes most acutely... the resonances of the relation between the colonial subject and Shakespeare": In 1920, De Beers, for whom Plaatje recruited,[9] donated money to the University of Cape Town for a Chair in English which totaled almost the same amount as the wages of the miners for that year.

> Thus the exchange: in order for the English teachers at the University of Cape Town to examine more colonial students about Shakespeare, extraordinary profits are extorted from the labour of 17,000 De Beers mineworkers (110).[10]

This rhetorical flourish, offered as the "The Real Sol Plaatje", has the effect of damning Plaatje in an unspecified way. He becomes, like colonial Shakespeare, an inadvertent agent of imperialist exploitation. Johnson problematises the post-colonial theorising which offers a chance for Plaatje's "Shakespearean" voice to be heard as resisting (105-

[9] In 1909, due to financial hardship, Plaatje worked as Bechuanaland Representative of the Mine Labour Supply Company Ltd. for a short time (Willan, 1996: 19).

[10] Brian Pearce, in a review of Johnson's book, says of this "*coup de theatre*" chapter ending: "The extract does not tell us what proportion of the profits of the company was directly extracted from the workers and how much from the international investments of the company, their leadership, expertise and management. The extract does not tell us how much of the teaching of the colonial students was devoted to Shakespeare. Furthermore, it does not tell us how the donation was used and over what period of time. Presumably the Professor appointed to the chair was awarded a moderate salary. What was the average salary of an English teacher at the time and how did it compare to the average salary of a worker at De Beers? The point made is an interesting one, but far more evidence is needed before an accurate assessment can be made" (1996: 81).

109).[11] Johnson thus relegates Plaatje to Chanaiwa's realm of the well-intentioned, but horribly mistaken, appropriated colonial subject, thus denying any possibility of real agency in the exchange with Shakespeare.

Leon de Kock warns:

> [P]resent-day researchers of colonial history should be wary of trying to retrieve the lost subaltern subject as a recovered authentic voice... lest further representational impositions are committed. One can, however, characterise the voices which are discernible... and be wary of misrepresenting these as evidence of a unitary colonial subject (1996: 107).

The suggestion that we should see our task of re-reading colonial history as one that will characterise different available voices fits well with the different voices of Plaatje that have been identified by his readers. Did Plaatje adore Shakespeare? Did he believe in The Bard's universal greatness? Does this mean he bought into the colonial civilising mission with slavish imitation of his masters? Can Plaatje's relationship with Shakespeare be read as a relationship with a series of texts (including the "narrative" of "civilisation") that carried with them a promise of political and social justice? The answer must ultimately be moot. What is possible to consider is the ways in which, for South African critics, Plaatje's relationship to Shakespeare has become central to an understanding of Plaatje's work. In order to allow for a Plaatje who is not victimised by the cultural violence of a colonial Shakespeare, it is important to acknowledge that Plaatje had his own agenda.

Beyond this, is there another way to read Plaatje other than either as a co-opted colonial subject, or as a subversive strategist? What more can we say about Plaatje's translations

[11] In post-colonial theory, Johnson finds a Plaatje whose juxtaposition with the great canonical Shakespeare would be "embraced" (108). Post-colonial theorists, according to Johnson, would trace the constituent strands of this Plaatje's identity; his construction as a subject would be compared to "Shakespeare's" construction as a subject. This "Plaatje-subject" would be used to explore how ambivalence works, how the contradictions of collusion and subversion might be managed, and how the appropriation of the Cape colonial Shakespeare might be negotiated (109). Ultimately, Johnson, suggests, this post-colonial Plaatje would be seen, following Bhabha, to be "engaged in a strategy of mimicry... an act of subversion and defiance" (*ibid*). Such a Plaatje is similar to the transforming, resistant subject explored by de Kock and Ashcroft, although Johnson inflects this post-colonial Plaatje with more skepticism, given that he is offered as one of four possible ways to "read" Plaatje.

of Shakespeare? Is there a way to free "Plaatje" from the binary of either subversive native Other or co-opted colonial subject, in a way that might allow him to artistically own his relationship with "Shakespeare", without reducing him to a victim of the colonial education system which Johnson details for South Africa? Is it possible to claim a hybrid Plaatje without privileging Shakespeare?

In a field concerned with another Other, work has been done on the act of women's translation in the early modern period. Translation has been seen as a strategy which enabled women to write without violating the perceived proscription against public speaking (although the extent to which this ideology should be taken literally has been contested). Many critics have been prepared to take these translators at their word, often made explicit in their prefaces, that translation is removed from the act of creation (Cerasno & Wynne-Davies, 1996). Despite the notion of imitation in the early modern period which has allowed us to read Wyatt's and Surrey's translations of Petrarch as original poems, many critics tend to see translations by women straightforwardly as an attempt to shelter behind the authoring male text.

However, other critics have illustrated the extent to which translation is an act of authoring. Danielle Clarke has illustrated the powerful political commentary found in female-authored texts of the period (n.d.). Clarke shows that translation is a site of female intervention and public involvement. She points out the ideological implications of the act of rewriting inherent in translation, as well as the historical reality that most readers would not read the translated text in relation to the original, many not having access to the original language. Mary Sidney-Herbert's translation of Petrarch's Triumph of Death is thus read by Clarke as directly involved in commenting on topical political issues, and Margaret Hannay shows how her translation of the Psalmes is a highly political engagement with, and tool for, the advancement of the Protestant cause (Clarke: 66-124; Hannay, 1985). In relation to Plaatje, Myrtle Hooper raises the question of translation, language, and power, emphasising that the audience for whom the translator is writing,

the translator's own "allegiances", as well as the power relations that exist between different languages, will affect the act of translation (1997: 103-13; 109).

Plaatje's acts of translation may have been overstressed as imitation, in the more modern sense, and underrecognised as acts of transformation and appropriation. This suggests itself in an evaluation of Diphosophoso (Mistakes Upon Mistakes/ A Series of Blunders, Plaatje's translation of The Comedy of Errors) by Shole J. Shole (1990/1). Shole contrasts Plaatje's translation to Raditladi's "mechanical, literal and unimaginative" translation of Macbeth (51).

Shole locates both aesthetic and political motivations in Plaatje's act of translating Shakespeare. Plaatje "wanted to share his experience of Shakespeare with his people, as well as to prove that Setswana is a literary medium capable of carrying what Shakespeare said in English" (51). The aesthetic and the political are related, since in order for such a project to succeed, Shakespeare's texts must be recognised as "masterpiece[s]", an aesthetic judgement which Shole accepts as a truism (63). Within this framework, however, what emerges is that attempts at literal translation from Shakespeare fail poetically and linguistically (not least because of the cultural contexts of English and Setswana), while using Shakespeare as a source is far more successful.

Raditladi's translation follows the original literally; the result is a piece of work at times so nonsensical "that one may wonder whether he understood his own work himself" (52). In fact, Shole's analysis of Raditladi's Macbeth illustrates that a direct translation, which does not make cultural and idiomatic allowances, becomes a "mistranslation" (53). As soon as Shole begins to illustrate Plaatje's great skill, however, it becomes clear that it may be more useful to conceive of his play as using Shakespeare as a source: Shole repeatedly stresses the "fine... free... and idiomatic" nature of Plaatje's translation (51); "Plaatje did not attempt to retain the original form at the expense of meaning... this is what makes Diphosophoso the success it is" (59); "At times his freedom reaches ridiculous extremes" (60); the play reads "like an original" (61); Plaatje "is inspired by

Shakespeare's excellent English to use excellent Setswana, and where he cannot translate, he creates" (61).

In his Introduction to Diphosophoso, Plaatje tells his reader:

> It has not been an easy task to write a book such as this in Setswana: it has been both difficult and intricate. But we are driven forward by the demands of the Batswana – the incessant and shrill cries of people exclaiming, "Tau's Setswana will be of no use to us! It is becoming extinct because children are not taught Setswana! They are taught the missionary language! They will lose all trace of our language!" That is why we undertook to tackle this task (Plaatje, 1996: 383-4).

Plaatje's linguistic and social activism is clear; he does not detail the need for Shakespeare to be available to the Batswana here for their own (moral or aesthetic) good, but for the good of the language, in order to prove its worth (at the end of his Introduction he characterises the translation of Shakespeare into Setswana as "doing something for" his people [385]). More to the immediate purpose (and given that I am working from a translation), it is interesting to note that Plaatje first designates this work as the writing of a book. He talks of translating Shakespeare for the first time when he mentions his difficulties in securing funding for the project (284) when, presumably, a "translation and compilation of Shakespeare's play" would generate more seed capital than the writing of a book in Setswana to explore issues of that language's orthography and linguistic muscle.

Because I lack Shole's or Plaatje's linguistic learning and skill, I cannot comment further on the nature of Plaatje's translation, other than to point out that both according to Shole's evaluation, and to feminist theories of translation, it seems that Plaatje's debt to, or reliance on, Shakespeare can be overstated. The reasons for this overstatement fit into the complex framework of the power of Shakespeare as a symbol of the best that can be said or done in the world, and into what may have been Plaatje's own objective, to use the "tyranny of Shakespeare's goodness" (Bristol, 1990: 5) in order to further the cause of the Setswana language.

Conceiving of Plaatje's translations as acts of creation in their own right allows us to shift the emphasis from his debt to Shakespeare (which allows Plaatje's education to stand for "native achievement"). Instead, Shakespeare becomes available to be South Africanised, which has implications for the understanding of hybridity as a useful theoretical tool for a post-colonial, and/or a South African, Shakespeare.

Tracing a tradition: Tell Freedom (in English)

Shakespeare in South Africa as a symbol of a certain kind of education, as a tool of protest, and as a powerful articulation of identity, is evident in the autobiographies of Peter Abrahams and Bloke Modisane, as well as the work of other writers for Drum magazine (most notably perhaps in the use that Can Themba made of Shakespeare in his writing, as will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter). Here I will begin to address the ways in which these writers' use of Shakespeare can be linked to Plaatje's. This use of Shakespeare maps a trajectory of South African literary Shakespeareans. What links these writers, from Plaatje to Themba, is their access to a particular kind of education which was compromised following the Bantu Education Act, as well as the ways in which class aspiration, inseparable in this instance from a particular kind of political protest, become exemplified by particular uses of Shakespeare.

Peter Abrahams is one of the first African writers in English to influence, from exile, the development of African literature (Scanlon, 2000: 4). Abrahams charts in his writing the personal developments and political realisations which his education afforded him more explicitly than does Plaatje. He was born into the group defined as "coloured", and so his experience of South Africa and issues of personal identity would in some ways be differently inflected from other black writers. However, he does address the shared identity of blackness between black and coloured South Africans, and he links his experiences of education and its implications with those of other black men. In Tell Freedom, published in 1954, the relationship between class, education, community,

gender, and textual (as opposed to "actual" or personal-historical) identity in South Africa in the first half of the twentieth century is developed.

Michael Green demonstrates that liberal humanism is one of the discourses which "dominated" Abrahams's writing (2001: 69). Abrahams himself details the ways in which his mission school education, including comprehensive access to English literature, became an important catalyst for his identity as a writer. Like Plaatje, Abrahams's relationship with Shakespeare was linked to his own creative acts. According to the autobiography, it was Shakespeare who was responsible for his desire to write and for his acquiring the literacy in English to do so. Abrahams incorporates into this tale an awareness of both the personal and the class positioning of the educated black man in South Africa. The resulting narrative reveals both the possibilities and the implications of a literary education. Abrahams draws out the hypocrisy of the liberal-humanist promise to recognise the common humanity of the individual made to the educated elite through the English literature (and the Christianity) they were taught. He traces the effects of the realisation of the hollowness of the promise on the writer as individual, and within the context of his socio-political awakening. The personal and political development of the young writer is explored in Tell Freedom. The result is a relationship which is both empowering and alienating.[12]

In his autobiography, Abrahams describes his encounter with the unbearable contradiction of the promise of universal humanity as it was taught through missionary education, and the reality of life for black South Africans:

> Of a total population of roughly eight million non-Europeans, about 500,000 were at school, about 6.5 percent. Of these, only 2.4 percent received post-primary education of any kind. On the children of the two million Europeans the State spent something like ten million pounds: on

[12] Couzens addresses the link between liberal politics and the emerging African educational institutions and projects (1985: 82-124). He sketches the influence of Booker T. Washington's placatory ideology on South Africans, and shows how this ideology of rationality, anti-militancy, and the moderating of demands for political enfranchisement was developed through institutions like the Bantu Men's Social Centre, which Abrahams marks as so important to his development as a writer.

> those of the eight million non-Europeans about one million.[13] The real burden of non-European education was carried by the missionaries. Without the missionaries of all denominations... much less than the half a million students would have been at school that year [1936]...
> The Church taught that we were all brothers in Christ, one with another... And the whites, those who had spat on us and on others, were all Christians. The equation did not work out. Where was the error?...
> Here, in this peaceful valley [the mission college Grace Dieu], the equation worked out. The Fathers who taught us lived up to their teaching... But we would leave this peaceful valley and go out into the big world. And there, among the whites, it did not work out...
> If there was any fault that we could lay at the door of the good Fathers and Sisters, it was that they had taught us too well. They had made Christianity a living reality for us,... a creed to live by, to measure our relations with others by. And the tragedy lay in the measuring (1954: 237-9).

Abrahams gives to Jonathan, Peter's Zulu friend who has come from the country to attend the college, the lyrical expression of the betrayal of the promise of civilisation to the rural African:

> "A boy is satisfied with his village, and the life of his village, because he knows no other... He is content. And then the white man comes into his contentment... The white man says the key to this world is to become a Christian and to have knowledge and education. The boy looks at the things of this new world. He finds them good... And so he becomes a Christian and he goes to school. Knowledge brings new desires, new beliefs: the god of love in place of the pagan gods of war of old; the new view of the stranger, the foreigner, as a brother to be welcomed rather than an enemy to be destroyed or feared; long dreams of a new life... The vision of the humble Christ, the father of all men, of all races and colours, supplants the little gods of old. And so the boy turns his back on the old world of his ancestors, opens his arms wide, and reaches hungrily for the new, superior ways that offer a whole new world. And so, a new man, he goes to the city to see and get to know. All his future, now, will be linked with the city. Even if he is to spend the rest of his life in the country, he must go to the city because it is the symbol of this new world..."
> Jonathan's quiet voice was silent for a while. He turned his dark face so that I saw only a stern profile.

[13] By the period 1951-2, the state was spending 43.88 pounds per white student; 18.84 pounds per coloured or Asian student; and 7.58 pounds per African student for primary schooling (Karis & Carter, 1977: 29). According to Johnson, by 1960, annual per capita expenditure on black education had decreased to R12,46 from R17,08 in 1953 (1996: 164-5).

> "It is difficult," he said.
> "Yes," I said.
> "I went to the city," he said. "And I learned these things are not for me" (235-6).

When Peter suffers at the hands of a white man in Pietersburg who looks at him with "the disgust one feels when touching human waste", his "mind forced the error of the equation into the peaceful valley called the *Grace of God*" (245), and he leaves the college.[14] The promise of human, and thus political, equality in Christianity, historically linked to the promise of "civilisation" and through this, by the role played by the missionaries, to formal education, is shown to be a lie in the context of South Africa's reality of racial oppression. This is not to suggest that the mission teachers were implicated in deliberately propagating false promises, or that what replaced mission schooling was preferable for being more reflective of social reality.[15] Rather, the intersecting discourses of progress, Christianity, and humanism, were revealed as double-edged swords. The double-edging of these discourses was made manifest when their rhetoric of equality, and their visions of a better world, were patently not matched by any commitment from the Empire which spawned them. At the same time, they could be invoked to legitimate oppressive practices. Bloke Modisane, in his autobiography Blame Me on History, reports developing a similar awareness: "What the history books and the teacher did not point out was that this civilisation initiated and institutionalised the degradation of the human spirit, that it was maintained and sustained by slave labour" (40).

What Plaatje experienced through the frustrated hopes of Native Life in South Africa, Peter expresses in the unbalanced equation of his mission education. This experience was not unique; Abrahams attended St. Peter's School after Grace Dieu, in relation to which Catherine Woeber comments:

> [A]ny thinking pupil from St. Peter's, from the mid-1930s on, would have immediately seen the contradiction between the Christianity within the walls of the school, and that outside. Moreover, that pupil would feel

[14] Abrahams left Grace Dieu in 1936, and South Africa in 1939, at the age of 20 (Scanlon, 2000: 5).
[15] Green comments that Christianity is rejected in Tell Freedom "not because of any internal failing on its part, but because it could not translate into the real world" (2001: 74).

> affronted by the Church's seeming inability to take a stand against the litany of socio-political poverty, job reservation, forced removals and pass laws that were the daily experience of black families (1995: 61).[16]

Despite the fact that access to this kind of education was afforded only a few, Abrahams linked his own development with that of his class: in describing his preparation for Tell Freedom, he recounts "the making of me, which is intimately tied up also with the making of my generation of black men in South Africa, and also with my definition of Freedom which, if well done, should at once be the definition of a group" (qtd. Scanlon, 2000: 10). However, Abrahams is not generally considered "the authentic voice of [his] people" by the critical tradition; his "awakening artistic consciousness set him ever more apart from them" (Scanlon, 2000: 4). This tension between personal identity and community is developed in Tell Freedom, and is clearly linked to Peter's experience of education.[17]

Shakespeare is the catalyst which begins the journey that eventually leads to exile. The education which changes and splits the young Peter is inspired by "[t]he short-sighted Jewish girl" who reads him Lamb's Shakespeare. This experience is the reason he goes to school for the first time, aged eleven:

> She turned the pages of the book in front of her. She looked at me, then began to read from *Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare.*
> The story of Othello jumped at me and invaded my heart and mind as the young woman read. I was transported to the land where the brave Moor lived and loved and destroyed his love. The young woman finished.
> "Like it?"
> "Oh yes!"
> "Good. This book is full of stories like that. If you go to school you'll be able to read them for yourself"...

[16] My thanks to Annie Gagiano for making me aware of this essay.

[17] Kelwyn Sole has pointed out to me a number of problems with this formulation: the ascription of community authenticity to any one voice is problematic; furthermore, the ability to re-imagine the self is not reliant on a formal education or on written literacy, as praise poetry makes clear. However, the point here is the ways in which Peter presents his experience of education: as exemplified by Shakespeare, and as linked to the personal development of the young writer, with concomitant social implications. Sole also points out that the alienation of the writer from his community is not unique to black South Africans, and problematises the racial inflection of this tension between personal identity and community. I am concerned here with a specific expression of these issues, insofar as Shakespeare is used as a trope in the formulation of identity.

> "Then I'm going to school!"...
> "I've started something!" She laughed. "But why didn't you go before?"
> "Nobody told me."
> "You must have seen other children go to school."
> "Nobody told me about the stories... When I can read and write I'll make stories like that!" (149-150).

In a discussion about the truth status of autobiography, as a process of writing and as an act reliant on memory, Woeber questions this incident. She points out that Abrahams's first language was Afrikaans, and that early in Tell Freedom he reports that he cannot reply when he is addressed in English.

> Is the turning point in his life therefore credible when, before he has even attended school, a Jewish secretary reads to him... from *Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare*? Could Abrahams really understand Lamb's English, and, if not, do we have to do here with the romanticisation of Abrahams's childhood memories? (1995: 66).

This is a useful warning. Woeber's suggestion, linked to Stephen Gray's, that Abrahams structured his childhood memories around his education in order to "draw a clear trajectory of the growth of the poet's mind" (*ibid*) is of less significance to my argument than the fact that Abrahams chose Shakespeare as the representative author to mark his entry into literacy. If it was not "factually" Lamb's Tales which inspired Peter, then Abrahams is gesturing towards his need to be able to tell stories as his inspiration for seeking education. Shakespeare becomes symbolic of Abrahams's poet's soul, his instinctive need for literacy, because Shakespeare is troped as the best that literacy can offer, as well as the most noble form of inspiration. The significance of Shakespeare for Abrahams is suggested by a comment from a contemporary, Es'kiah Mphahlele, on his own school experience (which Abrahams was likely to have shared, since they both attended St. Peter's): "We had a compulsion to memorize in my school days, and it was a joy to recite and listen to the grandeur of Shakespeare on campus and during school debates" (1984b: 76). Shakespeare becomes synonymous with a particular kind of erudition and linguistic aptitude.

It is precisely this access to Shakespeare, and what Shakespeare represents, that sets in motion Peter's alienation from his community even as he starts to come into his own identity as a writer. This split is linked to the growing awareness of his socio-political context, an awareness facilitated throughout Tell Freedom by his education. Peter finds he acquires knowledges and experiences he did not expect when taking Othello into his heart for the first time. Peter's reward for educating himself, along with the liberation of his poetic gift, is a splitting from his world:

> I attended school regularly for three years. I learned to read and write. *Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare* was my favourite reading matter… [Books] fed the familiar craving hunger that awaits the sensitive young and poor when the moment of awareness comes… With Shakespeare and poetry, a new world was born. New dreams, new desires, a new self-consciousness, was born. I desired to know myself in terms of the new standards set by these books. I lived in two worlds, the world of Vrededorp and the world of these books. And somehow, both were equally real. Each was a potent force in my life, compelling. My heart and mind were in turmoil. Only the victory of one or the other could bring me peace (161).

The books on which Peter feeds are versions of canonised staples of English literature: along with Lamb's Tales he reads Palgrave's Golden Treasury and "the Everyman edition of John Keats" (161). In the context of the poverty and brutality of apartheid Johannesburg, access to this "new world" of English literature has implications that "the world of Vrededorp" cannot contain. Increasingly isolated from his gang of friends, Peter feels:

> I was ripe for something new, the new things my books had revealed, to take the place of the old life. But what? And how was I to achieve it? I felt lonely and longed for something without being able to give it a name. The horizons of Vrededorp were inadequate. Where was I to find the new horizons of my needs?
> Impelled by something I could not explain, I went, night after night, on long lonely walks into the white areas of Johannesburg.
> Night after night, I left black Vrededorp and walked along broad, clean, tree-lined streets…
> I looked into the windows of these houses… A boy could read *Lamb's Tales* without strain in such light…
> Really, these streets and trees, almost, the clean air I breathed here, were: RESERVED FOR EUROPEANS ONLY…

> The familiar mood that awaits the sensitive young who are poor and dispossessed is a mood of sharp and painful inferiority, of violently angry tensions, of desperate and overwhelming longings. On these nightly walks, that mood took possession of me. My three books fed it (163-5).

So along with the beauty and liberation of poetry, Peter discovers a linked political and economic truth. His longing for a life of material and spiritual advancement is "fed" by his books. His desire for a personal alternative highlights the separate natures of the world of literature and its promises, and the world of a poor coloured boy in South Africa. "Critics generally agree that what does emerge from a reading of this diffident, perhaps idealized, portrait of the artist as a young man is a growing distance between the intellectual and his community"; this conflict became a theme of later novels (Scanlon, 2000: 10-1).[18]

Woeber comments that, without his education, Abrahams would not have been able to re-write himself specifically in the form of autobiography. This impulse, which Woeber also traces in Mphahlele's work, testifies to

> their need to define their own identity... in contrast to a hegemony which claimed the right to define them... Abrahams and Mphahlele used their education to write freedom and identity, yet the condition of that education was exile and a rejection of the error in the religious equation (1995: 67).

While it is possible to formulate the effects of education as at once emancipatory and alienating, a further point of interest is raised by the fact that it was precisely access to a humanist-inflected education that gave Abrahams and Mphahlele specific tools with which to fight conditions of oppression and inequality. English literature opened the world initially for Peter in Tell Freedom by pointing to these conditions, and thus de-naturalising them. A self-aware humanism has particular possibilities in the face of the oppressive conditions in South Africa.

In Tell Freedom, Abrahams offers a complex portrait of the educated black man and his relationship with other classes of black men, and to a lesser degree, women. Education is seen to be a way out of a racially-inflected, working-class positioning. The educated men offer access to a petit-bourgeois world that Peter needs in order to develop, emotionally and as a writer. At the same time, the apparent freedoms of educated black men in South Africa are given ironic inflections through the comments of other characters in the novel. Jim, a man with whom Peter works for a fortnight, points this out in a conversation about passes:

> "A man's life is controlled by pieces of paper."
> "Are those all the passes?" I had asked...
> "A countryman cannot pass without those, Beet... I had almost forgotten the best pass of all, Beet! It is the only one that makes me laugh!"
> "Yes?"
> "You have been in school, Beet."
> "Yes."
> "Well, if you were a black man who dressed and spoke like white people, you would have that pass. It is for the black men who are educated and say only the things the white people want them to say. If you, Beet, were one like that you would have this pass."
> "What is it?"
> "I saw a man with one. He was proud. He looked at all my passes and said he did not have any. He said he was free of them. I said: 'How is it?' He said: 'I am educated so I'm exempted.' I said: 'So you carry no pass?' He said: 'No.' I said: 'But what if the police stop you?' He said: 'I show them this!' And he showed me a pass! I said: 'It is a pass.' But he said: 'No.' And grew angry with me... So there it is, the pass that is not a pass!" (180).

Modisane comments with a characteristic mix of bitter anger and aching need for the social respectability he knows is his due:

> [D]uring the United Party Government of General J.C. Smuts[...] semi-educated and responsible Africans were encouraged to feel less black than their uneducated brothers; they were issued with Exemption Certificates, a Pass which exempted them from carrying a Pass, but most important they were formed into an exclusive and effective middle class, not white enough to be European and too respectable to be black. The

[18] The reference to Abrahams's "portrait of the artist" further makes Sole's point that the process of self-realisation and -formulation charted in autobiography should not be marked as specifically painful for black artists. See footnote 17.

> Exemption Certificate became a symbol of snobocracy. I became attracted to this class...(1963: 87).

A particular picture is drawn in Tell Freedom of the identities of these educated men, and their relationship with others, predominantly other men. The novel is concerned not just to detail the split between educated and uneducated, but between those from the country and urbanised men[19]:

> All manner of black men came to "The Burning Meat". I recognized those new to the city by their uncertainty, by their tentativeness, and the anxious friendliness in their eyes. The men of the city, the city born, had cold, expressionless faces, and there was a hint of arrogance in their bearing. The educated men I recognized by their shame and furtiveness. They came in quickly, quietly, looked at no one, ate hurriedly, and slipped out again. And if it happened that they saw another of their kind, they deliberately sat with their back to him, gobbled their food even more hurriedly, and slunk away even more furtively (186).

The community of black men who eat together is divided along complex lines, with formal education being only one division. The kind of informal education afforded an urban man by virtue of his knowledge of the city also separates him from the newly-arrived rural dwellers. However, this knowledge is not troped specifically as "education", as is clear in the contrast between the arrogant bearing of the "men of the city" and the furtive behaviour of "the educated men". In "The Burning Meat" education brings shameful awareness; pride is associated with being able to survive on the streets. This displacing, class-based aspiration is what Peter is yearning for when, having discovered Shakespeare and Keats, he walks in the white neighbourhood, "long[ing] for what the white folk had... envy[ing] them" (164).[20]

[19] The relationship between the men of the rural areas and the city is explored through Peter's boyhood relationship with Joseph, and his friendship at college with Jonathan, both rural Zulus. Ultimately, Peter sees in the burgeoning trade union movement, the point of transformation: "Here, a new social and political consciousness was in the making. The black man of the past, the peasant, was being turned into a townsman, a modern man who was part and parcel of the highly industrialized world of the present" (260).

[20] In Abrahams's work, such yearnings are not confined to men, although the picture painted in Tell Freedom is dominated by them; Eliza in Mine Boy, his second novel (1946), apparently a forerunner for the self Abrahams constructs through Peter, is: "groomed by her education to want the things white people have, she cannot reconcile these dreams with the reality of slum life and so is doomed to unhappiness. Hers is the untenable situation that compelled her creator to leave the country; writing in England, he rendered

Peter's first interaction with an educated black man confirms this class split.[21] While carrying white women's bags at the market, he encounters "a slim, neatly dressed, collar-and-tie young man" who is reading "The Bantu World"(187). The man notices Peter trying to read the paper, and is surprised that a literate boy is working in the market. Peter explains that he is trying to earn enough money to further his studies, and is hurt by the man's laughter:

> "You are wrong, my friend, you are wrong. I wasn't laughing at you. I was laughing at myself... At myself and all the others like me. You see, we despise you. Among ourselves, in our clubs and homes, we say it is you and those like you who make things difficult for us. We see you barefooted, dirty, running about the streets and markets. It makes us ashamed. We say the whites see you and think all blacks are like you. We say they never meet us, the educated, the teachers. So, to them, all blacks are the same. And we blame you for it... And how wrong we can be!... You showed me how foolish and prejudiced our own people can be" (188).

What Peter proves to the young man is that blacks who look uneducated may not be as uneducated as they look. The prejudiced behaviour lies in making an assumption about who has access to education. Education is still the crucial marker of potential for a different lot. The young man's concern that he and his ilk will be judged "the same as" uneducated Africans is not allayed by the realisation that education may "look" uneducated. The anxieties of the African petit bourgeoisie as increasingly prolific racist legislation throughout the first half of the century threatened to class them together with poorer Africans are detailed by Lodge (1983a: 2-11). Modisane again provides a personal, sarcastically painful expression of this class anxiety:

> And because the Afrikaners were such unintelligent oppressors they disturbed the perfect tranquility of the African middle class, mingled them with the commonality; the old guard, the masters of consultation and concessions found themselves without a protector commingled with the common dust (1963: 124).

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his character representative of people whose desire for a more fulfilled life is thwarted by unjust social parameters" (Scanlon, 2000: 7).

[21] For an overview of the theories which engage with the class position of the African intellectual elite see Roy (1995: 166-7).

Abrahams recounts a similar fear in his sister's upwardly mobile family, when a family of "slumland's children... ourselves as we once had been" moves into the neighbourhood and causes "resentment" (203).

The young man gives Peter an introduction to the Bantu Men's Social Centre,[22] and the copy of "The Bantu World", with the warning, " 'Although it's by and about black people, it's controlled by whites...' " (189).[23] Peter's first sight of the Club metonymically suggests the educated men who attend it, implying their class difference in terms which speak to their English education:

> I found the Bantu Men's Social Centre on the outer rim of Johannesburg... It was a huge building that stood on its own grounds. But for the huge sign on its front, I would have passed it by as just another European building.
> I hesitated uncertainly on the pavement till two well-dressed black men speaking English passed me and went in... It was a long room, spacious, and with big windows that let in light... At the other end were shelves filled with books. Comfortable settees were ranged about the room... They all spoke English here... (190-2).

English becomes the language of personal liberation:

> Because everyone at the Social Centre spoke English, it became a habit with me. I thought in English. It took the place of Afrikaans as my first language. My range of words expanded, and with it, the range of my thoughts. All my days and half my nights were crammed with learning, working, watching, listening, and the long, long dreams of youth (202).

The Dictionary of Literary Biography Vol. 225 notes that English became "the language of protest" as Afrikaans became "more closely linked with the language of the oppressor". Furthermore,

> This adoption of English alone was in sharp contrast to Plaatje and the early African literati, who sought cultural and literary fulfillment through

[22] The Bantu Men's Social Centre was "set up by American Board missionaries for the black petit bourgeoisie" (Scanlon, 2000: 4). Couzens details its importance for Abrahams, and also points to its creation as part of a continuum of responses to mitigate militarism (1985: 108).
[23] For the importance of the "White" and "Black" "hands" in publications for Africans in the 1950s, see Sampson, 1956: 13-36.

> an understanding of both English and vernacular languages (Scanlon, 2000: xvii).

Plaatje's commitment to "both English and vernacular languages" resulted in his using his command of the former in the services of the latter. When he refers, in "A South African's Homage", to Shakespeare's English as the language of love, he demonstrates his (and his wife's, and thus their subsequent family's) levels of erudition. At the same time, and through the same compliment, he critiques the colonial system which, through its allocation of resources, ensured that English was the language shared by Africans. He reports that he and his wife used Shakespeare to communicate their love while courting, because they were not well-versed enough in each other's language to express the subtleties of love: "the language of educated people - the language which Shakespeare wrote - ... happened to be the only official language of our country at the time" (Plaatje, 1996: 211). Plaatje demonstrates that "the language of educated people" is available to South Africans in the most personal sense; true ownership of Shakespeare's language is evident when the language is used to communicate love. At the same time, in his casual reference to the apparently arbitrary link between English and official power, is a protest against the neglect of other languages in a country with such linguistic diversity.

Couzens points out that the acquisition of English had been important for class mobility from the inception of mission education. The terms in which he expresses the development of writing in English in South Africa are significant: The Lovedale Register noted in 1887 " 'a small but steadily increasing class among the native population of this country, who are possessed of acquirements educationally, of which their forefathers did not... even know the name.' " Given "such a small number to draw on for writers, and with such a small number for audience", Couzens comments, "it is not to be expected that a Shakespeare could be produced overnight" (1985: 63-4). The tendency to conceptualise South African literary creativity in terms of Shakespeare is present in the critical writing about the Drum staffers in the 1950s, as will be discussed more fully in the following chapter. Of the Drum staffers, Can Themba and Bloke Modisane allegedly could not speak any other language than English (van Dyk, 1988: 62), although Modisane makes

reference to speaking in "an African dialect" in Blame Me on History (95). However, given Modisane's location of himself as familiar with "European" ways, it is perhaps not surprising that he would find himself placed in the category of English speaker. Obed Musi, a Drum staffer who started in the late 50s, claims that they "spoke and thought in English", and links this to pretension and snobbery (Nicol, 1991: 288). Themba himself apparently claimed he could speak no African tongue (Chapman, 1989: 191). Musi also reports, of Themba, Modisane and Nat Nakasa, that they "lived in this dream world, this white world... This created immense problems for them. [Nakasa] was another one who spoke only English". The range of problems faced by the black man who spoke English spanned the social spectrum: Henry Nxumalo reported that "[t]o speak English is a great setback for anyone coming into contact with tsotsis. It is considered to be a sign of showing off one's education..."[24]. On the other hand, "The Afrikaners are almost psychotic in their reaction to the English-speaking African, whom they accuse... of aping the white man" (Modisane, 1963: 94).

Sole notes the love of English expressed by many of these writers, and links it to both their education and their class fraction: "This love of English is united with the perception of the use of English as a possible cultural unifying force among urban blacks, with political and ideological repercussions", and quotes Mphahlele:

> We have got to wrench the tools of power from the white man's hand: one of these is literacy and the sophistication that goes with it. We have got to speak the language that all can understand - English (2001, 160).

Sole also notes, "This is of course nothing new. Both Plaatje and Dube had seen a necessity nearly half a century earlier for communicating in English" (177 n. 93).

In this context, proficiency in English was exemplified by knowledge of Shakespeare. Anthony Sampson, editor of Drum between 1951 and 1955, reports:

> The reason why I preferred to spend my evenings in Sophiatown than in the white world was because... the articulation of experience was much more interesting... people were very well-educated and very good at

[24] "The Birth of a Tsotsi" (Drum, November 1951) (Chapman, 1989).

> using words. I often felt the impact of the English language was much more direct with them. It was astonishing the way they could talk about the Bible and Shakespeare. A lot of them... had a tremendous depth of understanding particularly of Shakespeare (Qtd. Stein & Jacobson, 1986: 44).

Sampson depicts here, with some surprise, a world in which "they" were "well-educated and... good at using words". Musi's further comment on Nakasa links educated proficiency in English (of which a knowledge of Shakespeare is symbolic) with a dangerous implication for personal isolation. Referring presumably to Nakasa's suicide in exile, Musi contextualises Nakasa's behaviour in terms of a familiarity with Shakespeare:

> If I remember correctly, there was a history of mental imbalance in his family. Certainly there was a trace of paranoia in him, especially when he was drinking. He would suddenly leap up and quote lines from Shakespeare. I think he was totally unbalanced (qtd. Nicol, 1991: 341).

However, the status of English was precisely what made it a useful tool for the writers of Drum. Michael Chapman characterises as a form of "[p]rotest against the retribalizing policies of apartheid" the way in which English, "the language of international acceptance", is made to "bend[...] to the culture of township jazz" in Todd Matshikiza's "Matshikeze" style (1989: 183). English is centrally implicated in the new life the Drum writers were trying to articulate: both to describe, and, importantly, create. "English language and literature... was used both to capture the texture of township life in new and imaginative ways, and to cushion writers from it as they sought a haven from its uncompromising reality" (Gready, 1990: 146).

However, this form of resistance cannot escape its class-dependent skills. Although its management "wanted Drum to have an African style, and to capture some of the vigour of African speech" (Sampson, 1956: 27), and allowed the staffers to subvert English to carry this style, "even Drum's creative English served its main unifying function among the middle classes, and still estranged large numbers of rural, migrant, and working class blacks who were literate in different vernacular languages, if at all" (Gready, 1990: 146). The class and education differences of the writers, as well as the elevated status this gave

them, are suggested by Mphahlele's differentiation between "ordinary human beings" and "highly literate and educated people":

> Sophiatown was such a vibrant place because there were very many people who were not particularly educated, who were ordinary human beings, mixing with the highly literate and educated people like the Can Thembas and the Bloke Modisanes and the Arthur Maimanes (Qtd. Stein & Jacobson, 1986: 55).

But it is also clear in Tell Freedom that English, the language shared by African Americans and South Africans (as well as by South Africans of different cultural groups), is the language of both personal and political liberation for Peter (what Mphahlele calls "English as a working language, a learning language, a political medium of communication" [1984b: 77]). This liberation comes with Peter's exposure to books, and a place to read them:

> I reached up and took out a fat black book. *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois. I turned the pages. It spoke about a people in a valley. And they were black, and dispossessed, and denied. I skimmed through the pages, anxious to take it all in. I read:
> "... the Negro is not free." The Negro is not free... I remembered those "Reserved For Europeans Only" signs; I remembered no white boys ever carried at the market or ran from the police; I remembered my long walks in the white sections of the city,... I remembered Jim's Passes; I remembered "The Burning Meat"... I remembered spittle in my face...
> The Negro is not free.
> But why had I not thought of it myself? Now, having read the words, I knew that I had known this all along. But until now I had no words to voice that knowledge...
> Du Bois had given me a key to the understanding of my world...
> I replaced the book and reached for others...
> These poems and stories were written by Negroes! Something burst deep inside me. The world could never again belong to white people only! Never again! (192-4)

It is with the realisation that black men, too, have written, that Peter's world moves from the split Shakespeare caused in him by awakening the hunger for reading and consequently an awareness of racially-inflected class privilege, to a "revelation" (193) which changes his sense of ownership of the world. Upon meeting Mr. Dabula, to whom he has been sent to ask for a job at the Centre, he finds, "brown eyes that suggested

gentleness. Indeed, this gentleness of the eyes seemed a thing common to all the men I had seen at the Bantu Men's Social Centre that afternoon. Almost, it was as if I had met a new kind of black person" (195). This "new kind" of man with gentle eyes is the other side to the furtiveness and the shame of educated men at The Burning Meat. Here, at the Centre, the opportunities bought with dislocation are opened up to Peter:

> In the months that followed, I spent nearly all my spare time in the library of the Bantu Men's Social Centre. I read every one of the books on the shelf marked: American Negro literature. I became a nationalist, a colour nationalist through the writings of men and women who lived a world away from me. To them I owe a great debt for crystallizing my vague yearnings to write and for showing me the long dream was attainable (197).

Peter's initial epiphany marks a further point of split with his environment, for the first time with his beloved family. "I realized, quite suddenly, that I was rapidly moving out of this Coloured world of mine..." (197). The movement is complete when Peter returns from College for the first time, and visits his sister:

> She stared at me for a while.
> "You've changed," she said suddenly, frowning...
> There was a curiously intense quality about the way she watched me...
> "Matter, Mag? I'm the same me."
> She said nothing. Her eyes said: No, you're not. And because she had made me aware of it, I realized I had changed. I had a new, seeing coldness that had nothing to do with coldness of feeling. In the late afternoon, we set out together for Upper Vrededorp... Maggie was dressed in her best... I saw the anxiety behind her smile.
> "All right to go out with my educated brother?" (229).

The changes in Peter isolate him from the majority of his community. This isolation is expressed most directly through Peter's relationships with women. His first love, Anne, is lost through his relocation to college. She does not write to him, she tells him, because "I can't. I'm not educated like you" (217). His first adult relationship is with a white woman, whose brother-in-law tells him:

> Funny thing about women... The ideal thing would be to do without them. For you more than me. You're not likely to find a woman as developed as yourself among your own people. That's why I say I couldn't marry a non-European myself. It isn't colour but the level of

> development. You're in the same situation... In the present set-up your society is not likely to throw up many women who could be your intellectual companions as well as your bed companions. And there isn't much of an alternative, is there? Not in this country (255).

Peter's learning creates difficulties in his possible relationships with women; equally, it impacts on his desire to be a literary writer. Max Gordon, the trade unionist, says:

> "Don't be a bloody fool. You know, and I know, that there's no room for you here. Who wants a writer? The whites? Sure, if you'll be a performing monkey... The blacks? They've no time for reading. Most of them can't. And those who can are concerned with improving their miserable lot, not with reading poetry. You could become a propagandist but you are too much of a bloody artist for that... So what's left? Nothing. Nobody wants you..."
> "All right. So black writers are unwanted."
> "I'm not saying they're unwanted. The facts say that... The facts say there is no future for you here. You've known it in your heart all along. Keep to your plan and get out of here" (263).

Peter's plan is to go to England. Despite the epiphany afforded him by his discovery of "American Negro literature", which opened the world of writing to him because it was written by black men like himself, who spoke to his experience of the world, he chooses England over America "because the dead men who called were, for me, more alive than the most vitally living. In my heart I knew my going there would be in the nature of a pilgrimage... Perhaps I would go to America afterwards" (200).

Ultimately, Abrahams feels there is no place in South Africa of the 30s for an educated, aspiring middle-class, black writer who wants to write about his own world.[25] "The choices confronting [Abrahams], and other black South African writers after him, was between two evils... The alternatives were rootlessness, and perhaps a gradual alienation from his community in the quest for freedom and identity, or bitterness and its consequences, the loss of his humanity and sterility as a writer" (Scanlon, 2000: 5).[26]

[25] "Abrahams, who flirted with Marxism, adopts an uncertain and fluctuating position" with regards to a radical political tradition (Sole, 2001: 158).

The need to leave is not limited to Peter. At the Bantu Men's Social Centre, Peter reports of a group listening to stories of overseas travel, that "to a man, his audience dreamed of one day leaving this land" (198-9). Modisane reports that in some quarters education is a cause for further discrimination:

> There is a resentment - almost as deep-rooted as the prejudice itself - against the educated African... that he fails to conform to the stereotype image of the black man sanctified... by the white man. Such a Native must - as a desperate necessity - be humiliated into submission (1963: 94).

It is abundantly clear to Peter and his family that his education is a hindrance to his employability in South Africa if he does not want to become a teacher: "Whites did not like to employ non-whites with too much education... What was to become of me? What could I do with all my learning?" (232).[27] Equally, his propensity to write in English is a handicap, and his need to "Tell Freedom" is dangerous.

> "We talk about you sometimes," Teka [editor of *The Bantu World*] said. "We worry about your future. You know the Dhlomo brothers write in the vernacular.[28] There are one or two others. The only place they can publish is the Lovedale Press. And they must be careful what they write. Well, we wonder about you. You write in English and already you are touching on things that should not be mentioned... We say among ourselves: 'He can become a teacher but even then he will have to be careful about what he writes...' And someone else says: 'If only he were in another land.' And another says: 'There is no future for him' " (232).

Of the mission-educated writers who published autobiographies between 1954 and 1963, Woeber says, "Exile became a condition of their education, because... South African society was becoming steadily more constrictive, stifling [them] both as people and as creative artists" (1995: 58). As Abrahams tells it, Shakespeare inspired him to acquire education. Education gave Peter a love for English literature which provided him with access to the language. English allowed his political conscientisation via the works of

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[26] The theme in the literature of education as a liability even as it gave access to a humanist language of common rights is noted by Sole (2001:160; 177 n. 89).

[27] "School leavers found it especially difficult to find jobs because employers were unwilling apparently to employ educated blacks if the job requirements did not include literacy" (Lodge, 1983b: 349).

[28] In fact. H.I.E. wrote in English and R.R.R. in Zulu (Scanlon, 2000: 150).

African-American writers, which in turn liberated his sense of self as a black writer. All of this means that he had to leave South Africa, and he chose exile in England because of his experience of English literature. There was no place for a radical black writer in English in South Africa in the first half of the twentieth century.

Tell Freedom does not present this leaving as a terrible loss, as the alternative to the possibilities provided by education are bleak. However, it is clear that the kinds of education and vocation that become Peter's do not belong to the majority of South Africans, and that the consequence of achieving them is alienation from the larger community. In Tell Freedom, Shakespeare, whether literally or symbolically, is the impetus for the creation of an important South African writer. This is a Shakespeare who for all that "he" can offer the individual in terms of personal liberation, is not accessible to most; indeed, "he" functions as a barrier between the individual and his family and larger community. Ultimately, what the kind of comprehensive literary education brought Abrahams and other writers of his generation was "the freedom to say even to their educators: 'We don't need you to tell us who we are' " (Woeber, 1995: 68). But this freedom was limited to a few and, by the time 58 000 of Sophiatown's African residents were relocated to Meadowlands by the end of the decade (Karis & Carter, 1977: 25), it was limited even further.

It would be simplistic to construct Plaatje, Abrahams, and the Drum writers of the 1950s as belonging to a coherent tradition. However, what these writers share is the fact that they all make use of Shakespeare in the form and content of their writing; that Shakespeare becomes a useful point from which critics can operate to understand their writing; and that they shared access to a humanist-inflected literary education which was brought to an end in the 1950s. The following chapter details the presence of Shakespeare in the writings of and about Drum magazine and its staffers in the 1950s, in the context of the forced removals taking place in Sophiatown in that decade.

Chapter 5: Drum's Shakespeare

> I wish to urge our educated young men and women not to lose contact with your own chiefs. You should make your chiefs and your tribal councils feel that education is a really good thing. It does not spoil people nor detribalise them. Most of the miseries which our people suffer in the towns and the country today is due to this one factor, no confidence between the educated classes and their own uneducated people. The former cannot open any business relations amongst the latter and get good support because to be able to open a business anywhere you want confidence. (Pixley ka Izaka Seme, leader of the ANC, 1932; qtd. Lodge, 1983a: 10).
>
> [M]ore Africans go to prison than to school (Modisane, 1963: 38).

In the preceding chapter I sought to establish some of the class-related identity issues that help constitute a trajectory within South African literature of which the invocation of Shakespeare forms a specific part. One of the framing theoretical reasons to establish what I have called a South African Shakespeare is the need to find a way to understand Shakespeare's presence in local literature that allows for a change of emphasis, given the colonial history of English literature in South Africa and elsewhere. I want to account for the use of Shakespeare in South Africa so as to stress the agency of South African writers, and the ways in which they developed and used the cultural tools they were given under various kinds of duress; to describe a form of cultural transformation and resistance. In this way I seek simultaneously to acknowledge the inequalities in political and discursive power which forged South African material and cultural realities, and to describe a literary trajectory influenced by Shakespeare that is indisputably South African.

This task fits within the concerns of the post-colonial: "post-colonial studies have privileged theories of hybridity, syncretism and intermixture as ways to make sense of contemporary political and cultural reality" (Cooppan, 2000: 13). Hybridity (de Kock, 1996; Loomba, 1997 & 1998; Cooppan 2000; Ahmad 1995; Bhabha 1994), mimicry (Bhabha, 1994), ambivalence (Bhabha, 1986); creolisation (Hannerz, 1997; Nuttall & Michael, 2000), transformation (Ashcroft, 2001), transculturation and autoethnography (Pratt, 1992 &1994; Sole 1997), cultural translation (Hooper, 1997), "cultural fusion, and

cross-ethnic, transnational intermixture" (Cooppan, 2000: 12) - all these terms and concepts seek to describe something about the way that culture works in the context of world histories of colonisation and oppression. For instance, Pratt illustrates the complex ways in which a conquered subject engages with and reflects back the image of (in this case, him) self, in ways which make use of the representations of himself as other, an assertion of "self-as-another's -other, and of self-as-more-than-the-other's-other" (Pratt, 1994: 45). She asks,

> What is to be the field of reference of the categories of resistance and subversion? Co-optation and assimilation? Syncretism and hybridity? Cultural heterogeneity at the level of social structure and of consciousness? Can one move from identifying these dimensions of imperial interaction to assessing their effects and their effectiveness?... Within what has come to be known as the colonial discourse movement, terms such as hybridity (Bhabha, Garcia Canclini), syncretism (JanMohamed) and mimicry (Bhabha, Spivak) have been brilliantly used to examine cultural and linguistic interfaces between coloniser and colonised, the dynamic of what I have called... 'contact zones' (Pratt, 1994: 26).

What stands out from Pratt's pertinent questions about the use of "the categories of resistance and subversion", as it does from the list of concepts I have provided above, is the proliferation of terminology to describe "cultural and linguistic interfaces between coloniser and colonised". This proliferation of differently-nuanced terms suggests a struggle to express cultural development in the context of the dynamics of colonisation, and the difficulties of describing the relation between the cultural and the personal, the Other's sense of self within this context. As part of an analysis of self-consciously "postcolonial" exhibitions, Annie E. Coombes has suggested that the "prioritising of transculturated objects" bespeaks a need to demonstrate "the ultimate sign of a productive cultural contact between the western centres and those groups on the so-called 'periphery' and... the visible referent of the self-determination of those nations once subjugated under colonial domination" (1994: 89). While Coombes finds that the enactment of such an impulse problematically reinscribes "primitivist fantasies of early modernism" in the

exhibitions she analyses, she nevertheless recognises "hybridity as an important cultural strategy for the political project of decolonisation":

> For me the problem is not to question the validity of hybridity, either as a strategy of oppositional identity... or as an instance of creative transactional transculturation. I take both as contingent and conditional... (89-90).

It is clear by now, following the theoretical work done to date on the subject, that all cultural theories, especially those that seek to describe a process of mixing which is tied into response-as-resistance, should be taken as contingent and conditional (Loomba & Orkin, 1998). However, such theories, of which hybridity is perhaps the most representative, have been severely critiqued for their political ramifications as well as for their cultural assumptions.

Hybridity is "One of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in post-colonial theory" (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1998: 118). It originally referred to the creation of a third plant species from grafting or cross-pollination. In a post-colonial theoretical sense, hybridity refers to "the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zones produced by colonization" (*ibid*). "Transcultural", itself originally a sociological term, denotes in this context the ways in which "subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture" (233). Hybridity thus seeks to account for what occurs when cultures meet, in the context of unequal power relations. It encodes the idea that culture adapts to changing conditions, and thus itself changes. Culture, in this formulation, *is* as it *does*; it is an action, not an object. Homi Bhabha insists that "Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively... cultural hybridities... emerge in moments of historical transformation" (1994: 2).

For Bhabha, the hybrid space occurs in a "Third Space of enunciations which [is]... the precondition for the articulation of cultural difference" (38). This Third Space is

characterised by the ambivalence which Bhabha says informs all linguistic performance, following Derrida's notion of *difference* (36). The Third Space,

> though unrepresentable in itself,... constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixidity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew (37).

Thus the fact that culture, because of its responsive and organic nature, cannot help but perform itself in this space of hybridity, means that the notion of cultural purity – of originary space – is intrinsically false.

> It is only when we understand that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in the contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation, that we begin to understand why hierarchical claims to the originality or 'purity' of cultures are untenable, even before we resort to empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity (37).

This notion of hybridity combats nostalgic notions of pre-colonial cultural purity. It is also useful in countering the idea that colonised cultures were "deculturated", or that colonising cultures were unchanged by the colonial encounter. At the same time, "hybridity", as the concept underlying a range of terms of cultural co-mingling, has been thoroughly problematised for its tendency to generalise, and to override material reality with discursive theoretical constructs. "The idea of hybridity - which presents itself as a critique of essentialism, partakes of a carnivalesque collapse and play of identities,... comes under a great many names" (Ahmad, 1995, 13). Ahmad goes on to acknowledge that what he calls "cultural hybridity" is an important condition to recognise: "the traffic among modern cultures is now so brisk that one can hardly speak of discrete national cultures that are not fundamentally transformed by that traffic" (13). But he objects to the elision that occurs when this cultural hybridity, which, following Rushdie and Bhabha, is "specific to... the migrant intellectual, living and working in the western metropolis" becomes

> a generalised condition of postmodernity into which all contemporary cultures are now irretrievably ushered - so that the figure of the...

> migrant (postcolonial) intellectual residing in the metropolis, comes to signify a universal condition of hybridity and is said to be the Subject of a Truth that individuals living within their national cultures do not possess (13).

Three years earlier, Appiah commented, "Postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia: of a relatively small, Western-style, Western-trained, group of writers and thinkers who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery" (qtd. Seshadri-Crooks, 1995: 47).

The critique of a false universalising of experience, which silently privileges one particular identity location, is remarkably similar to the complaint made against humanism; indeed,

> In Bhabha's writing, the postcolonial who has access to... monumental and global pleasures is remarkably free of gender, class, identifiable political location... this figure of the postcolonial intellectual has a taken-for-grantedness of a male, bourgeois onlooker, not only the lord of all he surveys but also enraptured by his own lordiness (Ahmad, 1995: 13).

Ahmad objects that this kind of generalisation reduces history (in Bhabha's words) to "a mere 'happening' - 'in the pages of theory' for the most part" (14). Politics is thus always "contingent" and "displaced" (14). He points out that even in these terms, material reality is overlooked, not least because:

> Most migrants tend to be poor and experience displacement not as cultural plenitude but as torment; what they seek is not displacement but, precisely, a place from where they may begin anew... Postcoloniality is also, like most things, a matter of class (16).

According to the terms of Ahmad's critique, a similar logic of the subject as, at core, unified (despite its hybrid condition) that operates in humanism can be found to operate within a theory of the hybrid self. This critique applies to the concept of hybridity in which the hybrid self owns and glories in its condition, and is empowered by it.[1] Ahmad's

[1] Critiquing Ahmad's understanding of hybridity as reliant on a "totalizing impulse", Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks offers an alternative definition of hybridity as "not an arbitrary mixing of cultures and a surplus of

reminder that class is a crucial category in allowing the privileged experience of hybridity is another important link to the subject of humanism and this subject of "cultural hybridity". Both the humanist subject and the culturally hybrid subject are easily made silently bourgeois.

This characterisation of the hybrid subject is not intentional in Bhabha's work. He is working with a notion of the subject that is discursive, not essentialist. As part of his challenge to the "binarism of theory vs politics", Bhabha insists on the role of writing in creating history, and in producing political moments: "Textuality is not simply a second-order ideological expression or a verbal symptom of a pre-given political subject... [T]he political subject – as indeed the subject of politics – is a discursive event" (1994: 23). Indeed, in "The commitment to theory" Bhabha is concerned to address the fact that "the popular, common-sense view of the place of the individual in relation to the social is still substantially thought and lived in ethical terms moulded by liberal beliefs". Using Mill's essay "On Liberty", "the very heart of the liberal tradition", Bhabha demonstrates that "discursive ambivalence... makes 'the political' possible" (1994: 23-4). It is by imaginatively occupying the antagonistic space of the opposition that the subject is politicised. This results in a "splitting off in the signification of the subject of representation;... an ambivalence at the point of the enunciation of a politics" (24).

This positioning of ambivalence, the fact that "dissensus, alterity and otherness are the discursive conditions for the circulation and recognition of a politicized subject" (23) creates a third conceptual space similar to the Third Space within which Bhabha's hybridity is found. Bhabha conceptualises critical discourse as itself the language of hybridity, in that it "does not yield a *new* political object... which is simply a mimetic

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pleasure [Ahmad's formulation of Bhabha's theory] but the uncanny and undermining effect produced by the incompatibility of discourses in unequal power relations"; Ahmad is accused of reading Bhabha "as travesty rather than on [his] own terms" (1995: 62). Seshadri-Crooks also locates "the critique of positive knowing, of rationalism, even of humanism... which awkwardly positions postcolonialism as neither liberalism nor (an orthodox) Marxism, [as] that [which] has generated the crisis within this subdiscipline" (52).

reflection of an a priori political principle or theoretical commitment." Rather, critical discourse, if properly located in history, constructs what he calls "the moment of politics" (25), which is necessary for "the hybrid moment of political change" (28). Thus, for Bhabha, hybridity, far from relying on an essentialist subject, represents the capacity of critical discourse to "elide the politics of polarity" and bring about conceptual, and thus material, change: to allow us to "emerge as the others of our selves" (39).

Bhabha insists on critical theory's "conceptual potential for change" (31). However, it is precisely hybridity's capacity to conceptualise change that has been problematised: the concept of hybridity (like the label "postcolonial", of which "hybridity" is a "watchword") has been critiqued for methodologically compressing the "differences of other people's history" while simultaneously celebrating difference "on a theoretical and discursive level" (Cooppan, 2000: 2). Thus "hybridity" becomes an anodyne, a way of gesturing towards cultural activity without acknowledging its nuances. Loomba also details at length the dangers in assuming that all other differences (such as those of caste and gender) can be subsumed under the rubric of the culturally hybrid (1993; 1997; 1998. See also chapter three above). Robert Young details the history of "hybridity" in England, and shows how the concept has been, and is still, used "to suggest a fundamental racial determinism... rather than address the social and economic conditions under which [minorities] live" (1997: 148).

As part of a sustained critique of post-colonialism in South Africa, Sole details problems with the notion of hybridity: following the celebration of such an understanding of culture by post-colonial critics,

> difference, ambivalence and hybridity themselves [run the risk of being] seen as more authentic forms of identification... [where] transculturation and the ambivalent and fractured nature of identity are elevated to preferred political status, and this amounts to more than the scholarly observation that we all muddle along as bearers of multiple and shifting identities (132; 134).

Sole notes the dangers of commodified multiculturalism, and objects to the easy co-option of such notions of hybrid culture by the "new national dispensation" (133). Indeed, Ahmad casts hybridity as exemplary of "the cultural logic of Late Capitalism" because it is only the extent to which cultures are commodified that determines their equality in relation to each other (1995: 17).

The tendency to simplify complex histories and over-write historical and ongoing experiences of marginality that are characterised by suffering, is highly problematic. At the same time, in the context of colonialism's and apartheid's insistence on inviolable difference, and on blocking cultures and 'races' and brutally policing the borders of these constructed terrains, it is important to recognise that cultures do not form and operate in separate spheres, that identity cannot be utterly fixed or controlled, that the state cannot suppress cultural mixing no matter how extreme its policing. In the language of humanism, I could say it is important to recognise that humans, in the lived reality of their humanity, find ways to survive brutality and create beauty. This humanist, and thus potentially theoretically problematic, formulation cracks open the contradiction in post-colonial concepts of hybridity: there is a political imperative to recognise and acknowledge what individuals do with cultural tools, in order to escape eternal victimisation as an inevitable and ongoing condition of living in a colonised world, and in order to avoid eternally silencing the Other. At the same time, such a notion of the resisting individual is reliant at core on a liberal humanist-inflected understanding of a self which is self-generating, able to process and respond to the cultural conditions in which it finds itself. Because this notion of the resisting individual draws at some level on a humanist-inflected liberalism, it is all too easy for the assumptions about a shared experience of class and gender which have historically characterised the version of liberal humanism which I have denoted as problematic, to seep into post-colonial notions of hybridity as well. How then do we speak about theories of cultural transformation which account for oppressive histories, and resistance to these histories? How do we acknowledge the success of this resistance in a way which takes into account the specific location of the resisting subject (a concept implicated in liberal-humanist understandings

of the subject)? It may be that "hybridity" can best describe a class-dependent kind of resistance; that a notion of hybridity which acknowledges its humanist inflections may be useful.

In my discussion of the ways in which Shakespeare is manifest in the writings of and about the writers for Drum in the 1950s, I rely on just such a notion of hybridity to conceptualise a South African Shakespeare. I explore a way of using Shakespeare which privileges South African experiences; contributes towards ways of resisting apartheid's constructions of cultural and racial difference; and to ways of speaking against these oppressive constructions as they manifest at the level of political policy. The kind of hybridity I am invoking here is not the experience of the post-colonial migrant intellectual, but it is equally implicated in the category of class. This kind of cultural hybridity is confined to a certain cultural and class migrant who developed out of particular times in South Africa's political history. Colonialism's material effects resulted in social developments which had class, and concomitant cultural, implications. The hybridity I am seeking to describe here is an important aspect of social history in colonial Africa in general; it belongs by definition to what Appiah and Ngugi, amongst others, have designated the comprador class.[2] In the framework developed here, this denotes an aspiring- or petit- bourgeois subject, who has experienced a particular kind of education. Indeed, Lodge suggests that class is more useful than ethnicity as an analytical tool for understanding the history of resistance in South Africa (1983a: ix). Because we are dealing with questions of access to education, to kinds of jobs, and to the right to speak in particular ways, this expression of cultural hybridity belongs to the male subject.

This is not to suggest that such a notion of hybridity, expressed in a literary discourse by men of a specific class, should be regarded as completely triumphant. I want to

[2] Originating from the Portuguese for a mercantile middleman, "the term has evolved... to include the intelligensia... whose independence may be compromised by a reliance on, and identification with, colonial power." Ashcroft et. al question the assumption that "a comprador class is necessarily and identifiably distinct from the rest of society" since it is not only the bourgeoisie who have access to the material manifestations of colonialism, like "television or... Coca-Cola" (1998: 55).

acknowledge the forms that discursive resistance can take. I also want to challenge ideas of "pure" "African" or "European" culture in South Africa's more recent past. At the same time, I wish to endorse the important material fact that

> It is difficult to reconcile the image of a post-colonial world in which hybrid identities have triumphed over such narrow particularisms as race and ethnicity, class and gender, nation and nationalism, with the events of the past decade... Even the global optimism over South Africa's transition... cannot ignore the continuing legacies of racialized inequality nor the persistent appeals to ethnic and racial identification by current political parties... much of the contemporary politics of formerly colonized parts of the world remain imaginatively and otherwise bound to the constructs of race, nation, and class (Cooppan, 2000: 15-6).

I will seek to confine my discussion to manifestations of resistance that can be characterised as literary hybridity. It is difficult to speak about the discourses of and about Drum in ways that do not take into account the effects of these discourses on the identities of the writers. Thus, since most of the evidence used to describe the construction and expression of these identities is itself textual, the analytical task becomes on one level a closed circuit. In addition, this project does not seek to use hybridity to describe an overriding current global or national condition, but to find a way to talk about what specific South Africans - taking cognisance of class, race, and gender - did with what they were given by an oppressive context. I seek to do this in a way which reconfigures simplistic notions of both victimisation and co-option, and of the role of liberalism and humanism in South Africa. At the same time, as will be seen in the following chapter, I hope to continue to challenge one kind of liberal-humanist use of Shakespeare, which denies the realities of colonial education practices, with their implications for cultural practices and valuations. I do this by contrasting, in chapter six, the South African Shakespeare who is manifest in the trajectory I outline in the previous chapter and in this one, with the establishment of the Maynardville Shakespearean Open Air theatre.

The argument presented here is that in some ways a trajectory (based on education and class, as well as on a particular relationship with English literature, manifest in one form through a use of Shakespeare) can be traced from Plaatje to the Drum writers. Complicating this formulation is Sole's description of the black writers post-1948: "This generation saw themselves as sharply counterposed to what preceded them" (2001: 154). They disavowed the "apologetic and conservative" attitude of the older generations, and their missionary-instilled Christian humanism (154; 173 n. 50 and 51). In addition, Mphahlele conceptualises the "racy, concrete, nervously impressionistic idiom" of Drum, itself a "rejection by the bright new generation of 'the naïve and simple-minded generation personified... by Alan Paton's... Stephen Kumalo' " (Qtd. van Dyk, 1988: 40), in terms of the "grand Shakespearean image" (1984b: 79). Thus my construction of a specific trajectory, marked by a use of Shakespeare (and all that use represents in terms of educational and class aspiration), cannot be said to be one that the writers I discuss here necessarily share as a self-conceptualisation. Nevertheless, it remains significant that they can be "personified... [by] the psychological and social tensions" caused by missionary education; despite their "criticisms of certain forms of liberalism, many like their literary predecessors couched their protest in liberal terms" (Gready, 1990: 152).

Sophiatown and the Drum writers of the 1950s

Uncoincidentally, as well as being an important time in the development of different South African Shakespeares, the 1950s were significant in the formal growth of apartheid South Africa. The discursive creation, and the actual dismantling, of Sophiatown are indicative of both these processes. Sophiatown was constructed as a Shakespearean space through the writings of a group of men mythologised by their writing for Drum magazine. Some make direct use of Shakespeare in their narrations of their own identities and of the identity of Sophiatown. Sophiatown came to represent a space of urban survival and black resistance, as well as the violence and trauma of township life. It was also a symbol of everything the new Nationalist government was prepared to destroy in the name of a

rapidly formalising de jure apartheid.[3] Paul Gready has called "The co-existence of an emergent black urban culture and the National Party's intent to destroy such a phenomenon... both the significance and tragedy of Sophiatown" (1990: 139).

These writers can be seen to belong to a literary trajectory within African petit-bourgeois liberalism which links them to Plaatje, and specifically to Plaatje's use of Shakespeare. By making use of Shakespeare, this group of South African writers claimed "him" as their own. Such writers found themselves as urban intellectuals - through Shakespeare, specifically, and English literature generally (Abraham's account of his coming of age as a writer, discussed in the previous chapter, is an example of how this process was inscribed textually). Thus Shakespeare has been very useful to, and a very important influence on, the development of one strand of writing in English in South Africa.

The 1940s were a time of political unrest (including the growth of the trade union movement and programmes of strike action), social change (including rapid industrialisation as a result of the war, urbanisation, and the growth of squatter camps), and changes to state structures (which Sole has characterised as a series of crises) (Sole, 2001: 153-4). This turbulent period resulted in the Nationalist Party's victory in 1948 (Sole, 2001: 154). After assuming power in 1948, the Nationalist government set about establishing a framework for the society it wanted to create and buttress. Within a decade, a plethora of laws concretized the formal apartheid state, building on a tradition of discrimination that had been part of South Africa since its initial colonisation.[4] The

[3] For a history of the development of Sophiatown see Gready, 1990; Hannerz, 1997; Proctor, 2001 and Lodge, 1983b. The reasons for the destruction of Sophiatown are indicative of burgeoning formal apartheid in the new philosophy of the Nationalist regime; they are cited variously as slum clearance, the elimination of "black spots" from the white cities, and the "symbolic importance of eliminating African rights to the ownership of land" (Karis & Carter, 1977: 24). In addition, Sophiatown has been read as a geographical and symbolic space of resistance, impossible to control on both levels (Lodge, 1983b: 346-8). Proctor situates Sophiatown in its "patterns of class formations and conflict" in order to illustrate the social development of class (Proctor, 2001; 50). He concludes that Sophiatown remained substantially "working class" and as such outside of the control of the state, and less open to co-option by the "petty bourgeois leadership". "For this, it was necessary that it be destroyed" (83).

[4] The legal framework that pre-existed the National Party regime included the 1911 Mine and Works Act which looked to job reservation, and the 1913 Natives Land Act which dispossessed hundreds of thousands of people, allocating 7% of the land to 69% of the population. However, on assuming power, the Nationalists passed the following laws, amongst others: the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act 1949; the Immorality Amendment Act 1950; the Population Registration Act 1950; the Group Areas Act 1960; the

1950s became a time of increasing governmental oppression, and the encroachment of a police state on public and private spaces (one example is the "tausa dance" prisoners were forced to do in order to dislodge anything that may have been hidden in the rectum, exposed by Henry Nxumalo in Drum March 1954, and photographed by Bob Gosani).[5] Anthony Sampson called the 50s "a decade that shattered people's beliefs" (Qtd. Nicol, 1991: 2. See also Chapman, 1989: 184-5). The 1950s also saw resistance organisations responding to and incorporating the war-related social and economic changes of the 1940s, resulting in campaigns of mass action for the first time (Lodge, 1983a: viii; chapter one).

In this context, Drum magazine was born. It is not clear whether the group of men who wrote for Drum in the 1950s can be called a school or a set. There was no formalised commitment to a particular style or philosophy, and the forms in which they wrote ranged from short stories to sketches to investigative exposés to sensationalist tabloid journalism. According to Nicol, they can be "seen as a literary movement... perhaps in their fascination with urban living" only (1991: 7). However, Gready does refer to this group of writers as a "set",

> because although their experiences before and after this period vary considerably and not all of their writing is about or originating from Sophiatown or the Fifties, it was an era and place that was influential for all of them as people and writers... Mphahlele, Maimane, Matshikiza, Modisane, Themba, Nakasa, Motsisi and Nkosi all lived in Sophiatown at various stages during the Fifties (1997: 143).

Michael Chapman credits the Drum writers for not only being responsible for the "substantial beginning... of the modern black short story" but also for producing writing characterised by "moral and social questions"(1989: 183). And Mphahlele, despite his

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Separate Representation of Voters Act 1951; the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act 1951; the Bantu Authorities Act 1951; the Natives Act 1952; the Public Safety Act 1953; the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1953; the Bantu Education Act 1953; the Preservation of Separate Amenities Act 1953; the Natives Resettlement Act 1954; the Group Areas Development Act 1955; the Natives (Prohibition of Interdicts) Act 1956; and the Bantu Self-Government Act 1959 (Nicol, 1991: 5-6).

[5] See "Naked Man" and "Mr Drum Goes to Jail" (Sampson, 1956: 175-197). Modisane comments: "The Government is unyielding in its Native policy, the tentacles of discrimination spread their grip over every aspect of our lives, right into the very houses we live in" (1963: 103).

ambivalence towards Drum's writing, says of his fellow writers at Drum: "although we had diverse interests and intellectual pursuits, even as journalists, we shared this much in common: we had found a voice" (1984b: 78).

This voice had certain characteristics. The urban environment of the township was central to the writing of Drum in the 50s. Lewis Nkosi called Drum not "so much a magazine as a symbol of the new African cut adrift from the tribal reserve - urbanised, eager, fast-talking and brash" (Qtd. Hart, 1984: 35 and Nicol, 1991: 35). Musi also characterizes the magazine as reflecting the realities of everyday life where other forums projected an out-of-date notion of black urban experience: "Almost all the magazines before Drum were about 'Jim goes to Jo'burg' [the title of a popular movie made in 1949 (Scanlon, 2000: xvii)]. Drum came out with the 'Jim is in Jo'burg' reality" (qtd. Nicol, 1991: 34).

Furthermore, the Drum writers took their tone not only from the brutal energy of the township, but also from their own location within fractured South African society. Deborah Hart characterises the writing of the 1950s as "petty-bourgeois oriented", retaining "many of the attitudes of black elite writing in South Africa three decades before" (1984: 36). Mike Nicol calls the writers "literate, sophisticated men" with an American-inflected "irreverent love of English" (1991: xii). However, Chapman sounds a note of caution, "remind[ing] us of the meagre literary resources which would have been available to many of the writers" (1989: 206). Couzens's work on the explicitly liberal agenda behind the establishment of the social clubs whose libraries constituted an important proportion of the meagre resources to which literate African men had access is also an apposite reminder of the forces which would have influenced the tone of writers within this class-dependent trajectory (1984 & 1985).

Despite finding it important not to lose the ambivalences and complexities of personal experience in class-inflected ideological analyses (1989: 210), Chapman characterises Drum's "common denominator" during the 50s as "the glorification of individual mobility in relation to the class values of, following Couzens, the 'New African' " (197).

Chapman locates Drum's journalism in the "long tradition of Christian-humanism... appeal[ing] to authority in the name of civilized values" which initially characterised ANC-led resistance, and which can be traced to Plaatje and his contemporaries (194). This tradition of "Christian-humanism" stretches back further than Plaatje, as I discussed in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, Chapman's position corresponds with my suggestion that the Drum writers can be placed in a trajectory which begins to find its fullest expression in Plaatje's work.

Whether or not they are classed as a group on the basis of class or literary aspirations, what the Drum staffers of the 1950s – Henry Nxumalo, Todd Matshikiza, Arthur Maimane, Can Themba, Casey Motsisi, Es'kia Mphahlele, Bloke Modisane, Lewis Nkosi, and Nat Nakasa - did share (besides a tragic legacy of early death and/or exile),[6] was theoretical access to a particular kind of education that in the course of the 1950s became barred to young black South Africans. Before the passing of the Bantu Education Act in 1953, it was at least possible to acquire a "Christian-humanist" education, which included comprehensive training in English literature, in the missionary schools. St Peter's, an Anglican school, was particularly important for this group of writers (Visser, 1976: 46-7).

For all the complications that this kind of education brought (as detailed in the previous chapter), its loss was a blow to the people and the literature of South Africa, given what it was replaced by. The Bantu Education Act "potentially had a more profound and far-reaching impact than any other measure passed by the Nationalist government" (Karis & Carter, 1977: 19; see also Hofmeyer, 1987: 301-2). The logic underlying the Act was clear. Between 1949 - 51, a Commission on Native Education report was prepared which "urged reform that would 'prepare Natives more effectively for their future occupations' " (Chapman, 1989: 185). Verwoerd, then Minister of Native Affairs, said:

[6] Abrahams's work was serialised in Drum (Chapman, 1989: 188), but the group usually referred to as the Drum writers comprises the men who were on the staff of Drum in the 1950s. Mphahlele also mentions Richard Rive and Peter Clarke as part of "Drum's regular literary furniture" (1984b: 78).

> Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life... There is no place for him ["the Bantu"] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour... Up till now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and partially misled him by showing him the green pastures of the European but still did not allow him to graze there. [This situation would not improve race relations] if the result of Native education is the creation of a frustrated people (Qtd.Wilson & Thompson, 1975: 225).

As we have seen in the discussion of Tell Freedom in the previous chapter, some of those who received such an education did feel alienated from their communities, and were frustrated by the discrepancy between what it promised and the world in which they had to live. Bantu Education was in part the state's response to the effects of mission education on the development of a group of South Africans. Accordingly, Verwoerd also "criticized the former system as having created a class of Africans which 'feels that its spiritual, economic and political home is among the civilized community of South Africa' " (Wilson & Thompson, 1975: 78). Nevertheless, the apartheid government's Bantu Education Act was hardly designed to address the situation positively. Emphasising the destructive intent in the Act, Sole has stated that

> Bantu Education can be summarised as part of the attempt by the state to break the thrust of a possible alliance between white liberals, radicals and a black petty-bourgeoisie the Nationalists considered so challenging to their authority (2001: 157).

The Act also served to contribute towards job protectionism, by seeking to eliminate the potential competition represented by the black petit-bourgeoisie. In 1959 the Minister of Bantu Education insisted,

> If you have to supply the Bantu in the European urban locations with higher educational facilities on a large scale - on the scale which they want such facilities there -... [it] simply means that you train him to come into competition with the European (Qtd Wilson & Thompson, 1975: 226-7).

Small wonder, then, that "Africans deeply distrusted the Bantu Education Act of 1953, fearing that 'Bantu Education' would be of an inferior type, designed to condition Africans into accepting a position of subservience" (Karis & Carter, 1977: 29). Wilson

and Thompson report that the enforcement of the Act "roused more bitter feeling... than any legislation" except the pass laws (1975: 80).

The Act transferred control of schools from provincial to national government, under the department of Native Affairs rather than the Education Department. Mission schools could choose to be turned over to the government, or face diminishing subsidies. With the exception of the Catholic missionary schools, they closed down or became government-run. All schools, including private schools, had to be registered by the government (Karis & Carter, 1977: 30; Wilson & Thompson, 1975: 80). Changes included mother-tongue instruction in order to encourage "retribalization" (Chapman, 1989: 185). Although English was highly valued as a medium of instruction (Wilson & Thompson, 1975: 79; Barnett, 1983: 14), students were to be given only "a minimal knowledge of both official languages" in order to ensure that "the Bantu child [would be able]... to follow oral or written instructions" (Karis & Carter, 1977: 29). This was considered a tactic of isolation by "educated leaders" as was the Act's demarcation of schools and universities into different " 'ethnic groups' " according to which " 'tribalism' " was fostered (Wilson & Thompson, 1975: 79). The new syllabus "neglected subjects like mathematics which were essential for children who wished to continue to university education" (*ibid*).

The Bantu Education Act marked even less access to tertiary education for black South Africans when the syllabus went into effect in 1956 and the majority of the mission schools ceased to function according to their old syllabi. With the implementation of the Act, the ANC instituted a resistance campaign which encouraged parents to keep their children out of school. About 7 000 children dropped out of school (Karis & Carter, 1977: 20). By 1965, 40% of African children were attending school. Trevor Huddleston, who ran the Sophiatown Anglican Community's Mission, including St. Peter's, commented in 1986:

> What is so ghastly about what is happening now is that it is something one could see coming - I knew that it would be those kids under Bantu Education who would be the real sufferers... If you enforce a structure of education for inferior education on the grounds of race and colour, you're really aiming to destroy the future for the African people. And people

> saw that but at the time it was a terrible trauma because what were they to do with their kids? (Stein & Jacobson, 1986: 25-7).

The effect of Bantu Education has been characterised as dealing "English as a medium for black writing in South Africa... an almost killing blow" (Hart, 1984: 37). Van Dyk quotes Chapman: "As the children of Bantu Education, the New Black poets lacked the linguistic faculty, in English, of the earlier writers" (1988: 12). Nadine Gordimer also makes reference to the wide reading of the Fifties writers, and negatively compares this to the authors who followed them:

> Can Themba... was a great reader. He knew his Shakespeare well and his Dostoevsky. I find that young black people who write today don't read much and if they do it's mostly black writers - literature began about 20 years ago for them. But the Fifties intellectuals and artists read anything and everything. They were city people, educated before Bantu Education and their English was wonderfully, tremendously, lively (Stein & Jacobson, 1986: 29).

The strategies of writing in English by black South Africans after Bantu Education is a large topic in itself, and I do not wish to enter into it here. Rather, what I wish to point to is that the kind of education available to a group of black South Africans before Bantu Education is often exemplified by access to Shakespeare, as Abrahams illustrates in his self-fashioning in Tell Freedom, and as Gordimer's quotation above assumes.

Access to mission-school education thus not only introduces class and class mobility as an identity issue for those writers who documented their own and others' experiences; it also forges a link with issues of identity and access to fluency in English. While I am not making a value judgment here on writers' use of English following the implementation of Bantu Education, the silencing of, amongst others, the writers for Drum in the 1950s due largely to the Suppression of Communism Act, and their dispersion, often into exile, has been held responsible for the interruption of a South African "literary renaissance" (Visser, 1976: 55; 42) (although Chapman argues that "the 'renaissance' has not simply failed" [1989: 222]). By 1966, Mphahlele, Nkosi, Modisane, Matshikiza, Themba and Nakasa ("all of whom have at times been accused of bourgeois-individualist

dependencies" [Chapman, 1989: 185]) were banned under an amendment to the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 (Hart, 1984: 38).

Symbolic of these changes, very few black students were reading Shakespeare by the late 1950s (Johnson, 1996: 170). Thus the educated men of the 1950s had a kind of access to English literature that changed in their lifetimes. Mphahlele suggests that the influence of what I have characterised here as a particular literary trajectory was lost, due both to Bantu Education and to the imperatives of the struggle. He also suggests that knowledge of this trajectory is an important inheritance of which black South African writers need to be aware:

> Political styles demand a redefinition of a people's culture from time to time, and we have been too busy surviving. Our literature of the last thirty years reflects this... As present-day writers we need... to know our literary heritage... Those who are in charge of our education have made sure that we should never know our heroes, political or literary or educational... The present-day Black writer will simply have to go to libraries and consult books that will inform him of his literary heritage. Those nineteenth century and early twentieth century writers like Plaatje, Abrahams, the Dhlomo brothers, the *Drum* writer,... all these can be the self-education the writer needs to help him reconstruct the myth [that could stabilize our spiritual and mental life] (1987: 14-5).

All of the writers Mphahlele mentions by name share, amongst other things, the fact that they explicitly used, or were influenced by, Shakespeare in their writings. Although I have not dealt explicitly with the Dhlomos, it is apposite to note here that Visser describes them as "mark[ing] the transition from the early writers [including Plaatje] who established the characteristic type of the black South African writer, the journalist-author... to the generation which emerged in the fifties" (1976: 46). Similarly, Orkin notes a Shakespearean influence on the plays of H.I.E. Dhlomo (1998).

Shakespeare and Sophiatown

The idea of a Renaissance in relation to Sophiatown's writers resonates with Sophiatown's mythical status, an aura of glamour and tragedy that has been fuelled by

autobiographies,[7] docu-dramas[8], as well as by the stories, sketches and journalism in Drum itself, not to mention academic articles and theses. This aura has been informed, and no doubt fuelled, by a parallel constructed between Sophiatown and another mythologised place of Renaissance, Elizabethan England.

Anthony Sampson, widely accredited with the changes that made Drum the voice of the new urban African in 1951, came to South Africa with an Oxford degree and "a knowledge of 243 Elizabethan plays, which was to stand him in good stead when it came to understanding South African township life"(Nicol, 1991: 26). He was invited because of his Oxford-formed friendship with Jim Bailey, Drum's proprietor, and was initially circulation manager before he took over the editorship from Bob Crisp, the magazine's founder.

The events that brought Sampson to Drum were fortuitous. Possibly equally fortuitous, possibly part of a complex chain of economics which made it possible for the son of a mining magnate in South Africa to establish connections with an Englishman via a shared Oxford education and in the name of a journalistic enterprise, was the particular idiom that Sampson brought to his understanding of Sophiatown: Shakespearean. He said, "I think I must have looked a very cold fish in all that frenzied activity which seemed to me to be every bit a Shakespearean play with terror and murder waiting in the wings" (Qtd. Nicol, 1991: 26). This is a sustained metaphor. Elsewhere, in an interview, Sampson says:

> Sophiatown always seemed to have a special license of its own. What always fascinated me was the mixture of white characters one would see in the shebeens who drifted in for quite different reasons... some of them for pure lechery, some of them who just enjoyed the company of blacks, and some who were quite naïve - communists and trade union workers...

[7] In addition to Blame Me on History, there is also Todd Matshikiza's Chocolates for My Wife; Don Mattera's Memory is the Weapon; Godfrey Moloi's My Life, Volume One, and Miriam Makeba's autobiography written with J. Hall, My Story: Makeba (see Van Dyk, 1988: 170). In addition, Mphahlele's Down Second Avenue, Nkosi's Home and Exile, Themba's "The Will To Die", "Requiem for Sophiatown", and "The Bottom of the Bottle" in The Will to Die; and Nakasa's "From Johannesburg to New York" in E. Patel (ed) The World of Nat Nakasa are referred to by Gready (1990:159), and some are also mentioned by Visser (1976). Hannerz mentions Gordimer's novels and Trevor Huddleston's Naught for your Comfort as amongst the sources that kept "the mythical community alive" for him (Hannerz, 1997: 164).

[8] For example, Sampson, 1956; Nicol, 1991; and Stein, 1999.

> But that mixture was marvellous. I always thought it was very like the Elizabethan theatre, which I had studied at Oxford (Stein & Jacobson, 1989: 43).

Sophiatown is troped as a theatre world for his white English gaze. The lack of social choice which results from systemic oppression becomes endearing, romantic and picturesque. Sampson sees the class mixing amongst black South Africans as also having an entertainingly romantic "Shakespearean" quality:

> What was so unlike Britain or Europe was the mixture of characters. Because everyone was forced back into the black world, you got a mixture of the extremely well-educated, brilliant writers and teachers like... Can Themba, but there were a lot of them, together with gangsters and gangster's molls, businessmen and shebeen queens. So it was very much like a scene from Falstaff - a funny mixture of people with the odd pickpocket in the background. It was wildly romantic... (*ibid*).

Sampson clearly brings a delighted English gaze to the scene, understanding what he sees in terms of his own vocabulary: "I can remember watching a man hide under a table when word came that his wife was looking for him while his mistress was bundled out of the window. That was like watching an Elizabethan play" (Qtd. Nicol, 1991: 95). Such a process is not dissimilar to earlier encounters between Englishmen and Africans, where the colonizers bring, consciously or not, "certain structures of knowing"; "for representations of the Other are never original and none are innocent... Projection and the assertion of analogy constitute primary modes of 'knowing' the Other and carry profound implications" (Fothergill, 1996: 94) (although Sampson's use of Shakespeare to conceptualise Sophiatown is arguably less sinister then some of the strategies of projection and analogy utilized by colonizing literatures, it is nonetheless problematically voyeuristic). In Van Dyk's terms Sampson's "seduc[tion] by the mythopoetic nature of the context" is manifested in his recreation of Sophiatown "as determined by his own literary-mythical perceptions" (1988: 13). Repeating the scene he seems to have lodged in his head as emblematic, Sampson reports:

> One evening, in a noisy Sophiatown shebeen, I watched a faithless husband hiding under the table from his wife, while his friends chased his mistress out of the window... It came to me suddenly that I was watching an Elizabethan play. It was as if the characters had tripped straight from

> the stage of the Globe, lugging their dead bodies with them. Sophiatown had all the exuberant youth of Shakespeare's London. It was the same upstart slum, with people coming from a primitive country life to the tawdry sophistication of the city's fringes. Death and the police state were around the corner: and there was the imminent stage direction: Exuent [sic] with bodies...(1956: 80).

The theatricality of this description, and sense of enjoyment and distance it implies, take on particular resonance from a white Englishman especially when placed next to Modisane's account of living in Sophiatown's violence. This, too, is done with reference to Shakespeare:

> Violence and death walk abroad in Sophiatown, striking out in revenge or for thrills or caprice; I have lived in my room, trembling with fear, wondering when it would be my turn, sweating away the minutes whilst somebody was screaming for help, shouting against the violence which was claiming for death another victim... Is it a friend out there whose blood is screaming forth through the multiple stab wounds? A relative, perhaps?... a stranger?... [T]here in my room I knew that after the facts have been examined,... the rationalisations equated, the truth will confront me with a sense of shame; I would admit that no man, no relative or friend or stranger deserves the death of a beast. It was Caesar's boast that 'the skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks, they are all fire and every one doth shine'; if I allowed one spark - no matter how distant and insignificant - to be extinguished, then by this, my fire too would forfeit the right to flicker (1963: 59-60).

The difference between observer and participant is inscribed in the differences in emotional response to the drama. Sampson, as a spectator, uses the Shakespearean framework to describe the enjoyment of observation, in a way which manages to erase the fact that people were forced into townships; for Modisane Shakespeare's texts become a conduit for the expression of distress, as well as for signifying in a suitable register the effect of extreme and sustained violence on himself and others of his community. It seems from their accounts that this Shakespearean drama was more fun to watch than to be part of.

Modisane refers to Shakespeare throughout his autobiography: "Why not? Even in Shakespeare's time people have been known to 'smile and murder while they smile' "

(89). He ranges from quoting Laertes to exemplify the emotion which causes people to take part in riots (143) and Roderigo's description of Othello to illustrate the place of the black man in white society (168), to references such as: "If I am a freak it should not be interpreted as a failure of their [Western] education for a Caliban" (179); "We took up arms against the advance of poverty" (103); and "the sound and fury thrillers from Republic pictures" (65). Johnson characterizes Modisane as "using the words of Shakespeare's characters in order to explain his own psychological processes" (1996: 175-6). Given the complicated relationship Modisane presents himself as having with the "European" culture he loved, his use of Shakespeare must also signify his learning in Europe's best. Equally important is his desire to use Shakespeare to normalize the chaos of his own milieu in terms that are both accessible to his readers and that work to confound their value judgment (as Abrahams' young man is afraid whites will judge educated blacks on the standards of poverty and illiteracy in which they see most blacks): "Even in Shakespeare's time…"

The "Shakespearean idiom" manifests in pieces in Drum which describe and send up township life. A tabloidesque exposé called "My husband was a flirt" by "Joan Mokwena", who may have been one of the Drum staffers writing under a pseudonym, begins, "You know the old saying: 'Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.' And I'm scared of hell in the first place" and ends, "Yes. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned" (May 1953) (qtd. Nicol, 1991: 150-155). An excellent example of the fusion of two discourses, one of them Shakespearean, into something energetic, urban, and specifically South African, is Motsisi's in "Lobola? It's a Racket": "Ah, there's the rob – oops, rub!… catch me paying lobola!" (December 1956) (Qtd. Gready, 1990: 147).

Shakespeare also had a meta-textual influence on the writers of Drum. Casey Motsisi was known as "Shakespeare of the Shebeens", because of his tendency to get drunk and stand on a shebeen table reciting Shakespeare (Nicol, 1991; 216-226). Can Themba had been his English teacher, thus the man "who once taught Motsisi Shakespeare's sonnets… went on to teach him about life in Sophiatown" (220). In addition, the Shakespearean

idiom has spilled over into critics' descriptions of the life and times of the Drum writers, as in, "Despite its destruction the importance of Sophiatown as a community and a culture has lived beyond its death, because not all that was solid melted into air" (Gready, 1990: 163).

Can Themba, of all the Drum staffers the most "steeped in English literature" (Chapman, 1989: 209), also makes use of Shakespeare in his depiction of Sophiatown life. Shakespeare appears as both content and as stylistic feature. Examples include a slang reference as part of an illustration of tsotsi taal:

> 'O, Zigzagza, it's how there?'
> 'It's jewish!'
> 'Hela, Tholo, my ma hears me, I want that ten-'n-six!'
> 'Go get it in hell!'
> "Weh, my sister, don't lissen to that guy. Tell him Shakespeare nev'r said so!'
> The gibberish exchange was all in exuberant superlatives (Themba, 1985: 59),

as well as in his propensity to invent words, Shakespeare-like: "the law in all its horrificiency prohibits me" (2).

Shakespeare seems to feature prominently in people's memories of the kind of English spoken in Sophiatown, and Themba appears emblematic - of both a particularly proficient English-speaker, and of a particular social group. Don Mattera remembers:

> A guy like Can Themba, for instance... I mean really. Those guys used to talk more English into their ethnic language. Like "Ai daai kelele chap huti hey daai kelele, don't come here to me with your what-what, ai quelele kipi Shakespeare boei" (Stein & Jacobson, 1986: 13).

In this example of tsotsi-taal, as in Themba's above ("tell him Shakespeare nev'r said so"), "Shakespeare" denotes someone who speaks with authority. In Mattera's example, this quality is extended to imply someone whose authority is impressively rhetorical, with the additional implication that it is not to be trusted; "Shakespeare" is someone who tells tall stories. "Kelele" comes from the SeSotho "telele", tall , and "quelele" seems to be a

variation of the same word.[9] Mattera's example would thus translate roughly as: hey, that tall chap, hey, that tall one, don't come here to me telling me things, hey [disgustedly] tall-guy-Shakespeare-boy. In Themba's example, the suggestion is: if Shakespeare didn't say so it isn't true, or it shouldn't be listened to. In both cases, "Shakespeare" denotes access to language either as tales, or as truth.

The association of Shakespeare with rhetorical skill was also used to signal a general atmosphere of linguistic aptitude. Mphahlele links English, education, Themba and Shakespeare, in order to point to the kind of English available in the Drum environment: "[A]t Drum... we spoke English. The dark-room guy and the tea-girl spoke English too... Can Themba might throw rich Shakespearianisms around but he knew that a great number of people would understand it" (56).

Themba's first short story, which was also the winning story in Drum's first short story competition, has as its protagonists a young couple, victims of "Love['s]... often ill-starred ways" ("Mob Passion", published in Drum April 1953) (Nicol, 1991: 162-72). Instead of a Montagu and a Capulet, we have an umXhosa and a MaSotho, but the tragic consequences of their communities' irrational hatred are written in the stars, or at least, in the literary tradition.

In his most sustained use of Shakespeare as both idiom and vehicle, Themba picks up on Sampson's metaphor ("Anthony Sampson, some-time editor of Drum, was perhaps the first person to remark that the turbulence of urban African life was like the stage of Shakespeare's Elizabethan world..." [Themba, 1963: 150]). He, too, writes of Sophiatown in terms of Elizabethan England, drawing out what he denotes the flamboyant theatricality of both places. He goes on to extemporise about South Africa in terms of Shakespeare's plays. Themba's use of Shakespeare to describe aspects of South Africa is different in quality from Sampson's. Despite drawing on the Englishman's analogy, Themba writes a Shakespeare who enters into his service rather than using a

[9] My thanks to Margaret Monanana Mminele for her help in translating the tsotsi-taal.

"Shakespearean" world to denote the position of an audience member. Themba draws Shakespeare into South Africa, makes the dramas speak of Sophiatown and other South African spaces, in contrast to Sampson's descriptions which utilise a Shakespearean sense of the absurd to amuse a delighted spectator.

In what can be characterised as an example of Ashcroft's cultural transformation as resistance (2001), Themba offers a sophisticated, ironic, humorous and ultimately bitter use of Shakespeare in "Through Shakespeare's Africa", subtitled "Falstaff, Dumizulu, Dube, Agincourt". He begins by naming the similarities between "Africa" and Shakespearean drama: "the action, the passion, the lasciviousness, the high drama, the violence and then [following Sampson]: 'Exuent [sic] with corpses' " (150). Themba characterises what he identifies as the daily violence of African life as something

> Shakespeare would have understood without the interpolations of the scholars, and in this wise the world of Shakespeare reaches out a fraternal hand to the throbbing heart of Africa (150).

Themba claims a special relationship, a brotherhood, between Shakespeare the Elizabethan writer and Africa's "throbbing heart". Why Themba would want to draw a particular connection between Shakespeare and "Africa" becomes clear as he goes on to use this relationship to express political anger, in a characteristically sardonic tone.

By writing his familiarity with Shakespeare "in this wise" into both the style and the story, Themba demonstrates at once his own sophistication, education, urbanity and intelligence, and the stupidity and brutality of the system that denies him equality. In form and content, Themba harnesses the best of English to make a point about the worst of South African. His tone offers ironic detachment while still retaining a current of very immediate anger, pain, bitterness. This contrasts with Sampson's delighted viewer, whose position in the audience protects him from pain.

In retelling the story of Julius Caesar, "that... starting point in the Shakespearean odyssey for many an African who has staggered through literacy", Themba incorporates a

reference to both the fraught history of literacy for Africans, and to African achievements in this sphere: "There is a translation in Tswana by Sol Plaatje" (150). The amalgamation of themes in the South African Julius Caesar he presents, from high culture to apartheid ugliness, all wrapped up in tales of blood, is reflected in the mixture of registers Themba uses, colloquial and formal, "Shakespearean" English, and isiXhosa, with a dash of locally resonant characterisation to thicken the plot (the conspirators are men "from the cities"):

> Apparently, Chief Kaiser Msi had trampled down the haughty head of most of the lesser chiefs in the Transkei... He was so widely acclaimed by the rabble and the world at large that many of these disgruntled chieftains murmured: 'Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world/ Like a Colossus...' But there were other Xhosas, mostly from the cities, who resented the rapid rise of this upstart... A bright idea hit them! What they needed was a high-placed Xhosa...Dilizintaba Sakwe... As the Americans would say, they sold him the line of how Kaiser was ambitious, and his ambition threatened the weal of the Transkei, and how Kaiser had to die that Transkei might live... On Ntsikana's Day... the conspirators approached [Kaiser]... they stabbed him, one after another, and when he saw Sakwe also as one of his killers, he cried out in anguish: '*Tixo, nawe, mntwanenkosi*!'... Ah, me... that is fantasy... (150-1).

The difference in tonal registers, between the formal and casual, contributes to Themba's ironic sense, which points to the apparent difference in generic registers between Shakespearean tragedy and African politics. On one level, Themba emphasises this apparent difference by his mock-regretful sigh, "Ah, me... that is fantasy..." However, the irony doubles back on itself, and Shakespeare becomes a vehicle for pointing out that Julius Caesar perfectly incorporates African stories and experiences. On the one hand, this illustration of the applicability of "Shakespeare's" play serves to underscore the common humanity shared by Africans and the original recipients of the best of the "Western tradition". At the same time, by pointing to the Shakespearean quality of African politics, Themba also suggests that there is an African quality to Shakespeare's plays.

Similarly, pointing to attributes shared between Shakespeare himself and "the youth of the townships", Themba asks,

> And is it really an accident, or just another of my exaggerations, that both

> young Boeta Shakes and the youth of the townships hanker after acting and the stage? Dramatisation, posturing, seeking special effects, are so much a part of our daily lives that often we are startled when some critic says such-and-such an African actor was very good. All the time we thought he was just living… Perhaps, this is why we necessarily exaggerate (151).

Themba turns the young actor-playwright into a youth of the township, stressing the common human love of life in the exuberance of both Boeta Shakes and the young Africans whose culture is misunderstood (by whites) and thus needs explanation in explicable, and elevating, terms: "No wonder Shakespeare stepped off the boards and wrote the people's stuff" (151). "The people" become Shakespeare's people, the people of the world, of which Africans are a vital part.

Themba continues to illustrate what he designates as African Shakespearean situations. Through a Johannesburgian Falstaff, he makes the point that the "striking two-world contrast in South Africa has already been remarked upon by a few of our more perceptive white writers." Themba thus uses Falstaff to bring up South Africa's social and economic discrepancies. The underworld that Falstaff traverses is transposed onto townships, allowing Themba not only to detail disparate social conditions, but also to refer pointedly to the whites who, like Prince Hal, enjoyed "slumming it" in the townships, including the shebeens of Sophiatown. At the same time, one of the ironies in the reference to their "more perceptive" comments is that they, at least, are exposing themselves to life and people in the townships. This makes them Princely to the townships' Falstaff, a designation which not only points to their privilege, but at the same time gives their willingness at least to visit the other world a Shakespearean stamp of approval.

"Of course," Themba goes on to say, the "[striking contrast between the two worlds in South Africa] is the staple of the Non-white writers…" for whom reciprocal access to the world of white privilege, and the ability to cross the borders between the two worlds, is not a possibility. "Non-white writers", Themba thus suggests, live permanently with an awareness of the contrasts in South African society. What is fashionable – and thus

trendy, and transient – for white writers, is the "staple" subject-matter of both the writing and the lives of black writers, equal in education and skill (as this use of Shakespeare by Themba is elaborate proof) but not under the law to their white counterparts. Falstaff thus operates as a symbol which resonates both from within the plays in which he appears, and from within the (recognisable and endorsed, because Shakespearean) tragedy and absurd comedy that is South African life; Shakespeare is invoked to express and authenticate the bittersweetness of this experience for those most subject to the power of the state.

It is not simply that South African life reflects Shakespearean themes. Shakespeare was so accurate in his depictions that he wrote about Themba's South Africa:

> [I]t took Shakespeare, about 300 years ago, to report on the frolics of a high-born youth from wealthy Parktown among dubious companions in Alexandra Township (151).

Themba is pointing out that in South Africa, there is no concomitant history of "European" depictions of life in the townships; this is the task which has been the province of "Non-white writers". Since "it took Shakespeare" to "report" on the one side, South African black writers become possible Shakespeares for the other side.

Furthermore:

> No-one has told us all that Johannesburg has been doing in Sophiatown, Kent in Alexandra, or Mike in Orlando. These boys were accepted among tsotsis, cherries and churchgoers as readily as was Father Huddleston. I wish more of the township bright boys had heard of Harry Bolingbroke (151).

Themba shows up white racism by pointing out that across the social spectrum, blacks - from tsotsis to churchgoers - "accepted" a range of whites - from "Mike" to Father Huddleston - "readily." Finally, in suggesting that Shakespeare is not in fact as accessible to "the township bright boys" as he should be, he may be commenting on the relatively recent change in access to literacy for these "bright boys".

Themba goes on to offer a mock-dramatic dialogue between "labourers… a school-teacher, and… a cop" which draws out many issues important in the lives of black South

Africans. One of his labourers tells a story which expresses the frustration of doing menial work, for a racist white boss. The boss's capriciousness and cruelty become especially pointed when the labourer makes it clear that both men recognise the labourer's education and abilities qualify him for different work, but his skin colour traps him in the menial services of this white man:

> Here is an authentic piece of township conversation...
> FIRST LABOURER: But what's wrong with the white man, he?... Today at work, the boss sent me out to the Post Office to buy stamps. When I returned, he wanted to know "wherrer hell you been?" He said he's been waiting for his tea... Ten minutes later he came to the sink, leaned in the doorway, with legs crossed and a funny smile on his mouth: "When will you blacks grow up? I'd never've thought a man with your education would wash cups and make tea." I suddenly felt blindingly mad, as if I could stab him, and suddenly, too, gave up (152).

Another example is the schoolteacher's lament,

> SCHOOLTEACHER (bitterly):... Look at me. I'm educated, *ne*? I know what to teach and what not to teach, *ne*? But it breaks my heart to see what I teach just because the white man tells me that it is good enough for black children. Why do I go on teaching? I've got to eat (152).

The policeman's complaint is also about "The white man", who is blamed for the brutality the policeman has committed for the state, in the name of his job:

> THE COP (still off-duty): The things I have to do for these white men, *Mcui!* (smacking his lips and crossing his fingers) God will hear us one day. When He asks me, I'll say it's the white man. All those poor men I've led in a crocodile to the jail, it's the white man. All those women I've left husbandless, childless, *nyatsi*less, God, it's the white man. Those heads I've broken, those ribs I've kicked in, those noses, those mouths, those eyes I've bashed... God I feel like crying.... (152).

Through this dramatic dialogue Themba points to both the complicated position caused by economic necessity for one kind of civil servant - the teacher - and to the policeman's hypocritical refusal to accept responsibility for a system he continues to prop up. He may also be illustrating the degrees of complicity with the state in which some kinds of black workers are involved.

Themba brings in "the big-bosomed shebeen queen" (152) to act as the foil - " 'I don't want *ma-politika* here at my place'... (The tension breaks, and they all laugh hilariously)" (153). He then refers his reader to "King Henry V Act IV Scene 1" and comments on the "dramatic irony" of "the common men" speaking their mind to the king. This point is made in order to accommodate an aside - that in apartheid South Africa, most black South Africans ("the common men") do not have even this kind of accidental or deferred recourse to expressing their opinions to the powers-that-be: "(save that in these latter days consultation as direct as this is frowned upon)" (153). Through recounting the dialogue of his African Shakespearean characters, Themba has, of course, used the possibility of dramatic and ironic "asides" to express his own opinion, in an indirect manner. Thus he flamboyantly points to his ability to outwit any would-be silencers. The use of Shakespeare in this task further contributes to the demonstration of his learning and wit. Just as Shakespeare wrote characters who communicated with their ruler, so Themba writes himself a position from which to speak his mind about those in charge. Themba thus uses the Shakespearean half of his "Shakespearean Africa" equation to facilitate the African voice, partially by "elevating" African concerns to the realm of "high" English drama, and partially by using dramatic techniques that are Shakespearean. Like the master playwright himself, Themba suggests, he is merely presenting his emblematic characters: he concludes this scene with the ironic assurance, "I choose no sides in this lofty debate. I only point to the mood in which the common men speak and think of their overlord" (153).

Moving next to Othello, Themba uses the sexual and racial politics of that play to mock savagely the defensive identity of the white man. It is precisely the black man's reputed superior physical prowess (sexual and labour-related) which threatens the white man into behaving as he does - implicitly a critique of apartheid policies. Themba jibes at

> all the horror that one can conceive in the imagination of a backveld farmer who has tended his lands, jealously; guarded his honour, savagely; and contemplated his women in this dark jungle of black, virile, uninhibited men, fearfully; leap up when these words ["Even now, now, very now, an old black ram/ Is tupping your white ewe!"] are hurled to affright the night (153).

He then takes the opportunity to advise his urban black readers, Othellos all ("we who live in the great cities of South Africa... We have managed to uncurl the veneer of the white man where it has warped a little and... we have met eye to eye with him, fallen off our haunches on our backs and guffawed... Where we have proven that we are his equal... we have raised the fury in him") on how to get a white girl: "It is just this that Othello went and done. Worse still, he made himself indispensable to the state. It is this, also, that the urban African is continually doing" (153). Themba adds his final insult to the injury of the white man's threatened potency by elaborating on his own achievement in having acquired a white woman, and a real Desdemona at that:

> "Nay, man, Boeta Can, you got yourself a Jewess that's got background and bodice; looks like the lord took special time off to make her. Not one of those weatherbeaten crows from Fordsburgville." For the boys are particular about what kind of a white girl you found yourself (154).

Themba's casually brutal sexism is not reserved for white women:

> A friend of mine tells me that if he ever got arrested for raping a white woman, he would tell the judge: "Your Honour, I'm aggrieved that anyone could ever imagine that I would ever be attracted by a scrawny, colourless woman like that... Allow me to bring before the court a full-blooded African woman and I will show you where I am capable of rape..." (153)

This use of Shakespeare, then, also has a particular kind of "male" flavour. Boeta Can invokes "Boeta Shakes" (151) in order to attack the white man where he is envisaged as being most vulnerable: through "his" women. Themba's political point, about the white man's fear and oppression of the black man, is made with clarity and coldness, the ironic distance allowing the heat of his bitterness to be cooled and sharpened into a weapon.

Finally, Themba brings his discourse of politico-sexual rivalry back into the realm of the state's brutal, extreme, dehumanising (and thus inhumane) policies, which in their political control of the personal overstep the boundaries of truly "civilised" behaviour:

> By the way, let this quickly be said in the world that Shakespeare cast for Othello and his miscegenatious doings, this kind of thing was not illegal. They had not yet come round to an Act of Immorality. The law, those days, was more concerned with whether charms and witchcraft were

> practised on a girl to turn her mind to unnatural love. That was a serious crime. But we in the townships have long passed that stage. City-bred lover-boys who still use "roots" to catch the girls get laughed out of the shebang (154).

Themba's irony is characteristically complex. In Shakespeare's Venice, he suggests, it was only a matter of time until they would "come round" to implementing racist legislation, thus pointing to the truly backward inevitability of the white man's racism. Furthermore, in Shakespeare's Venice, witchcraft is still taken seriously, whereas "civilized" urban Africans "have long passed that stage". The colonial discourse of the White Man's Burden (of which "Shakespeare" is a component), which needs barbarous natives to civilize and which encodes Western cultural, religious and moral superiority, is dismantled.

Themba offers a kind of addendum on Merchant of Venice at the conclusion of his discussion of Othello:

> One thing that beats me is that Shakespeare shows more compassionate understanding for Othello than he did for Shylock... I could not escape the impression that Shakespeare joined in the... anti-semitic rabble to make sport of the Jew. 'Tis strange, 'tis passing strange. Dammit, 'twas mean. And, fancy, in that other Venice there was hardly any risk that anyone would have peopled else the isle with Calibans (154).[10]

Themba reinscribes the black man's imputed potency and the white man's fear of it, by suggesting it is the main cause of racial hatred. He also highlights his own tolerance and civility, larger even perhaps than Shakespeare's. Finally, he concludes his article:

> But I wonder what we shall be like when that time comes, after we have turned the last folio, and the curtain has fallen upon all the buffoonery and mock-heroism and painted lives and pathetic half-hopes of our little fretful spell upon the stage. What manner of men shall we be then... or, for that matter, shall we be men? (154)

Smoothly appropriating Prospero's final metaphor, and thus grasping the whole Shakespearean oeuvre and returning his piece to its starting point - that Shakespearean

[10] Plaatje, too, empathises with Shylock. See his re-writing of a portion of Shylock's speech on the epigraph

drama functions as a metaphor for life, and for African life - Themba highlights the bathos of racism. His inclusive "we" overwrites apartheid-imposed separations, and points to the common mortality of all "men". In a masterful (the adjective is used advisedly) Shakespearean appropriation, Themba claims Shakespeare for South Africa to speak of an African experience of apartheid; and to articulate a complex resistance to the notion of the "native" as less "civilised".

Ashcroft explores how "[m]astering the master's language has been a key strategy in self-empowerment in all post-colonial societies... [E]ffective post-colonial resistance has always used the cultural capital of that imperial system it is dismantling" (2001: 58). This may be a useful general point to make about Themba's use of Shakespeare, although apartheid South Africa comprised a layered and complex "imperial system" of which "Shakespeare" is only one part. The key issue in Ashcroft's formulation is that language becomes a tool for the comprador speaker, and not, as is often asserted (perhaps most famously in Ngugi's description of the colonised African mind), vice versa, because "comprador identity", the access to the colonial world gained though language use, comes about not through the acquisition of the colonial language, but "through the act of speaking itself, the act of self-assertion involved in using the language of the colonizer" (57).

The Drum writers can be seen to belong to the same trajectory as Plaatje, in the South African Shakespeare they mobilised to express their frustrations. They have been criticised for their apparent lack of political commitment. Gready's final analysis of the group, as he conceptualizes them, is as "aspirant black writers" with "anguished inner lives", who were not politically coherent individuals, who were ideologically confused and ultimately, not activist enough in their writing (1990: 151). Sole suggests that many of these writers, carrying the legacy of petty-bourgeois liberalism, were not as politically committed as they could have been (2001: 158); Van Dyk's thesis is that the political content of their writing has been undervalued; and Chapman stresses their concern to

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page of this thesis.

depict social reality. Addressing this debate ("Was Drum all glamour and cheesecake, at the expense of providing a proper forum for the most pressing issues of the day...? Or were the glamour and the racy images a clever way of camouflaging the potent messages contained in the deeper texts that were there to be explored by the more conscientious reader?"), John Matshikiza refers to "the split personality of Drum." He also mentions the "bizarre point of view" of the National Party (which must have relied in part on the presence of the white editors), "that Drum was actually a communist front, encouraging urban blacks to have ideas above their station, whether in the bravado of their lifestyles, the flamboyance of their dress, or in the over-educated English in which they wrote" (2001: x). Clearly Drum's resistance to apartheid was obvious, even if the authorities couldn't quite follow the details.

This kind of resistance relies on traditions of thought and writing which are both liberal and humanist. While this fact points on the one hand to the oppositional potential of these philosophies when mobilised as discourses against apartheid, the educated resistance expressed in English exemplified by these writers for Drum is also implicated in the development of liberalism as part of bourgeois ideology in South Africa today, as will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter. In apartheid South Africa, it was perhaps easier for radical political intention to co-exist with middle-class aspiration. Sole notes that many of the writers were more active in cultural organisations than in political movements (Sole, 2001: 158-9) (while not seeking to overwrite the very real class differences and interests extant during this period, I would seek to confound any easy separation of culture and politics). Sole suggests:

> One is left with the impression that, outside of the context of the apartheid state, at least some of these writers would have been contented members of the bourgeoisie, and hence had a feeling of identification with white liberals and Western culture rather than the black mass. Their petty-bourgeois origins are expressed by frustrated bourgeois aspirations, which in certain other situations they could possibly have fulfilled (2001: 162).

This class-based critique is important to bear in mind for any discussion of the nature of the resistance offered by writers in the trajectory I have sketched in this chapter and in the last.

Nevertheless, in the context of Nationalist fears of "blacks" who were "above their station", and of the aims of the Bantu Education Act, on the one hand, and in the context of their access to a certain kind of literary education, with all the complexities it brought, the Drum writers were political in the same way Plaatje was: by transforming colonial culture to serve their own ends. Both used the tools they had to protest and call attention to wrongs. Mphahlele says of the writing in Drum that, "the writer had found his tongue, a language and relative freedom of expression that matched the political expression of the decade" (1987: 12). Thus Drum's political resistance was written into its sometimes Shakespearean idiom and/or form, and English as a medium for this expression was co-opted; the "best" of the English language becomes a tool for South African writers to use for protest.

The Drum idiom then, was elite, educated, characterized by a tone that ranged from wry to ironic to bitter, and partly flavoured by an awareness of language, drama, and education troped as "Shakespearean". One more important point remains to be made about the characterization of this use of Shakespeare. This African Shakespeare is written by and largely about men. Dorothy Driver has illustrated Drum's "aggressive demarcation of masculine and feminine spheres," and linked these constructions to urbanization and consumerism. She details how Drum "established gender in its Western configurations" (1996: 232; 234).

In the stories and journalism of Drum, women occupy a subject status which is deferred or secondary, if present at all. Women often figure as possessions, most usually through the sex their bodies represent. One example is in Nxumalo's "The Birth of the Tsotsi", where the entrance into criminality is marked by access to "Assaults, drink, stabbings and loose women"; "they drink, play dice, smoke dagga and enjoy the company of bad

women" (Chapman, 1989: 21). When women's bodies as sex objects are not signifying the vice to which young tsotsis have access, women's sex becomes troped as female criminality. Of the noasisas, the female tsotsis, Nxumalo reports:

> Very often the shop-lifters haven't the chance to put their stolen articles into the large handbags, and so they smuggle them in between their legs. It is for this reason, among others, that the skirts they wear are tight-fitting at the waist and broad and long at the bottom. They do not wear any bloomers (19).

Similarly, at the Monday parties which are established by young criminals in order to attract wealthier men so that they can steal their money, the men are set up by "a beautiful sex-appealing woman" (19).

The use of women's bodies, in the stories and on the covers of Drum, has been variously mentioned, defended, and enjoyed by commentators. Nicol explores the use of "Love and Hot Dames" for which he interviews Sylvester Stein, editor after Sampson, who comments: "cover girls sold that magazine. It wasn't a matter of demeaning anybody... Men like to look at women and women want to see what they could be" (1991: 143). Nadine Gordimer is enlisted to explain the attitude of the men:

> The nice thing about the men on *Drum* is that they really loved women. I think when men really love women the idea of women being objects doesn't arise. For them it was a real appreciation and a joy to see a curvaceous woman in a bathing suit. The way they presented it, it wasn't offensive, it wasn't a *Playboy* spread. It wasn't sexual harassment, it was meant in the nicest way possible (Nicol, 1991: 145).

Gready discusses the "frequently sexist" writing, and links it to the writers' "functional attitude to sex in which they pursued both escapism and identity" (1990: 156). Drum's use of women seems to have an element that is widely considered acceptably part-and-parcel of its energetic discourse of violence and *joie de vivre*; Van Dyk's description of the photographs that depicted "the vigour that Sophiatown represented" is a list which delights in replicating the feel of the Drum diction: "hip-cats jiving, gangsters in shark-

finned cars, boxers sparring, mass meetings at Freedom Square, jazzmen jamming and of course, cheesecake in swim-suits" (1988: 17). The discourse, if it includes "of course" women as "cheesecake" problematises the possibility of speaking for, to, or about women. That many, if not all, of the pieces supposedly written by women were in fact penned by the all-male staffers, is a neat illustration (Dolly of the popular Heartbreak column, it turns out, was a composite of some of the staffers, who were exclusively men [Nicol, 1991: 143; 149]).

This South African Shakespeare, the Shakespeare of an educated elite who, starting with Plaatje and stretching through Abrahams and into the Drum writers exemplified by Themba, is bourgeois, creative, and embattled. "He" belongs to men who, to various degrees enlisted Shakespeare, as a sign of their learning, as personal inspiration, and as the best of British humanist culture, to fight in their struggle for social recognition and political equality.

A kind of hybridity is at work in this process. The South African Shakespeare which is written into being is not a Shakespeare who belongs or defers to the "West", even as "his" function is partially to appeal to professed "Western" humanism. Rather, he is first and foremost the voice of a particular kind of class- and gender- inflected South African resistance to colonial and apartheid practices of "racially"-based inequality. This discursive figure is well-described by a theory of culture informed by post-colonial understandings of culture's ability to transform under pressure. This South African Shakespeare challenges notions of cultural purity, by not "belonging" to either half of a (false) binary: South African/ Shakespeare. By embodying culture's fluidity, and by creating something "beyond an economy of species" (Green, 2001: 49), this figure lives in Bhabha's Third, hybrid, Space. "He" is informed by the historical conditions necessary for "his" creation: mission schooling and its role in processes of colonising the minds of its students, partially by English literature's "deceit"; the development of class in South Africa, with its concomitant implications for increasingly formalised apartheid economic

and social structures; and the increasingly oppressive political situation, with all its attendant silencings.

At the same time, a particular Shakespearean discourse is created as least partially as a tool to serve the purposes of a loosely connected group of men, writing in English in South Africa in the first half of the twentieth century. This discourse, then, is hybrid because while it is shaped by one set of colonial cultural inheritances, it is also fundamentally of, about, and for the men who wrote it - marked by a particular kind of access to English literature, inflected by a Christian-humanist education and a liberal belief in the individual's rights, and by class aspiration. The connection between class and liberalism's subject, insofar as liberalism entrenches bourgeois values, begins the following chapter's discussion of another face of South African Shakespeare.

Chapter 6: The kind of thing which keeps the magic of Shakespeare alive: "Shakespeare is African"

> There is something about Maynardville... which seems to shift the requirements of one's critical perspective a little. What Maynardville does for Shakespeare is perhaps best judged by looking at the audiences who stream into the park in their droves: entire families breaking out together, solitary couples holding hands and sharing a blanket, once-a-year adventurers daring to brave themselves to "art", droves of schoolchildren lured by the promise of an outing. Carrying blankets, cushions, and picnic hampers, they fill the little moonlit dale with the buzz of real expectation...Just the thing for an early autumn evening under the stars. It is this kind of thing which keeps the magic of Shakespeare alive (Hauptfleisch, 1989: 99; Hauptfleisch, 1990/1: 91).

> It became a matter of the greatest surprise to us to realise that some of these people (ie. the [liberal] whites) were living appallingly empty lives... We had thought their lives immensely beautiful, imagining them to be enriched by numerous, glittering concerts and plays we could not enjoy... If everywhere in Europe the virtues of the bourgeois life were visible, South Africa had nothing to show for it except the Johannesburg skyscrapers, the mine dumps and the Cape blue train (Lewis Nkosi, Home and Exile [1965]. Qtd Sole, 2001: 161).

This chapter will explore the nature of liberalism in South Africa in order to offer a description of a South African Shakespeare which can be contrasted to the Shakespeare of Plaatje and the Drum writers traced in the previous two chapters. As much as I wish to stress the transformative and resistant aspects of culture, I wish to acknowledge and describe other practices of culture in South Africa, and "Shakespeare's" part in these practices. Only by acknowledging the full range of possibilities inherent in Shakespeare in South Africa can we release the potential to reconceptualise "Shakespeare" as something of use. I will illustrate a manifestation of this second, "liberal" South African Shakespeare by analysing the construction of Maynardville, "the open-air Shakespeare theatre" ("The Maynardville Chronicle": 6), as a space of liberal English identity. I will examine responses to the play uMabatha, the "Zulu Macbeth". Lastly, I will present a snapshot of how the "liberal Shakespeare" has fused with the South African Shakespeare

invoked by Plaatje and the Drum writers, resulting in a "new South African" Shakespeare.

In the first half of this thesis, I pointed to the different possibilities inherent in humanism, and sketched the continuation of elements of humanist-inflected logic in traditions of radical criticism which sought to critique humanism's inability to reconcile an ideal subject with the realities of social and political contexts. One of the points that has arisen from the mapping of the development of English literary study, and literary Shakespearean theory, is that theoretical positions within the discipline that seem antithetical may have inherited strands of logic that they in fact share. Similarly, the two South African Shakespeares presented here share elements that can be characterised as liberal and humanist, in their philosophical understanding of universal human rights and values, and in their class aspirations.

These shared elements ultimately allow for a fusion of the two kinds of Shakespeares, which are not, in the final analysis, as different as they historically seem. The resisting, transformative South African Shakespeare described in chapters four and five joins with the traditionally liberal-humanist Shakespeare described below, resulting in a New South African Shakespeare which is constructed to be available for export to the global Western market. The profit from such a Shakespeare is accruing exactly where it should, to the group (marked by race, class, and gender) to whom it belongs.

Two faces of Shakespeare in South Africa

Shakespeare - as an embodiment of literary education and linguistic aptitude, and as a moral exemplar - was part of a discourse of resistance in the writing of and about Drum magazine, at a time when apartheid was being formalised with an unprecedented commitment from the new government. Can Themba, one of the most longstanding Drum staffers of the period, could co-opt a range of Shakespeare's plays in order to offer a

complexly ironic critique of apartheid South Africa. The kind of education required to facilitate this access to Shakespeare was increasingly barred to future generations of black South Africans with the advent of Bantu Education in this period. Mission school education enabled some of its students to identify with its humanist ideals, and provided tools with which to demand equality, even as the experience of living in an increasingly formally racist state engendered frustration at the limits of what Western humanism offered in practice.

Frustration at empty promises made by a group of predominantly white South Africans, however well-intentioned or theoretically viable, can be said to characterise one set of responses to a political tradition that has arisen in South Africa with a self-proclaimed link to the humanist ideal of the individual entitled to a series of rights. Liberalism in South Africa has been identified largely as the sphere of the English,[1] and accordingly, as having a link to what Shakespeare has been made to stand for in South Africa. This is no simple signification. Allowing Shakespeare to represent liberal aspirations or practices in South Africa means that "he" denotes both a humanist, humane foil to the dehumanising apartheid state; and that "he" is complicit in apartheid education practices, entrenching and naturalising white privilege by encoding a particular history and literature as the best the world has to offer, and by palliating apartheid privilege through weak and empty expressions of theoretical equality unmatched in social practice.

At the same time as the South African use of Shakespeare expressed in the work by and about the writers for Drum was finding expression within a context of increasing repression, another South African Shakespeare was taking shape. Maynardville, founded in Cape Town in 1955, was a space committed to the nurturing of a kind of Shakespearean "culture" (which understands itself as liberal), which can be contrasted to the subversive South African Shakespeare epitomised in Themba's "Through Shakespeare's Africa".

The story of the founding of Maynardville in 1955, set up to house a "permanent Shakespearean Company" ("Maynardville 1955-1964": 3) as well as its initial performance history, fits into a South African history of privilege and oppression. The South African Shakespeare constructed by this story is white and liberal, and thus part of a long South African tradition of (at best) well-intentioned but naïve humanist-inflected politics, and at worst, hypocritical and self-centred colonialism. Either way, this South African Shakespeare is a beneficiary of apartheid. The history of Maynardville offers an example of how the African can be seen to have been "written out of the encounter" between the racist Afrikaner Nationalist and the liberal English humanist (Johnson, 1996: 180). In this encounter, Shakespeare, standing for "culture", was a critical term. The removal of Africans from this encounter becomes literal once we acknowledge access to land (among other kinds of spaces, from cities and institutions to equal access to citizenship and humanity) as an issue crucial to South African history, to apartheid, and to the 1950s. Sophiatown and its surrounding townships came into being because Africans were denied ownership of most of the land in the country. It was destroyed because it was a freehold "black spot" space, and uncontrollable.

Access to land has also long been an issue for liberal politics. John A. Dixon, applying discourse analysis to public response to the establishment of an informal settlement in Hout Bay, points out:

> The differing conceptions of land rights offered by liberalism [which asserts the individual's right to an inviolable private domain] and apartheid [which asserts the necessity of racial division] should not... blind us to their ideological collusions (1997: 17).

Paul Rich has illustrated the relationship between the development of ideas of segregation, and the growth of liberalism in South Africa. He demonstrates that discourses about the land have always been integral to the idea of segregation. What he calls the "ideology of territorial segregation" was, he says, the driving force behind the

[1] "There is no tradition of Afrikaner liberalism" (du Toit, 1987: 35); the existence of "black liberals" is discussed in more detail below. See also Welsh, 1998: 7.

racist ideology that developed in South Africa, in contrast to the biological racism which informed the development of segregationism in America. It is the discourse of territorial segregation, often taken up by liberals, which Rich says legitimated racism and facilitated the economic exploitation that underlay the pre-apartheid legislative and social groundwork (Rich, 1984: 5-6). Liberalism in South Africa, like humanism, has a complex and contradictory historical and political inheritance.

Liberalism in South Africa

As addressed in the first chapter, Mike Kirkwood offers a sustained critique of the tendency amongst liberal English speaking white South Africans to characterise themselves as the mediating term between two extremes (1976: 106-8; see Johnson, 1996: 158-61).[2] This self-identification as the rational and humane point between two extremes is an important characteristic of South African liberalism, a political philosophy which has also been invoked, on the one hand, as the apogee of racism, and on the other, as a fundamentally black African quality.

Despite arriving in South Africa with British liberals in the Cape, liberalism was only formalised as a political party in the early 1950s (Johnson, 1998b: 377), at the same time as Maynardville was established, Sophiatown demolished, and the National Party's apartheid government was entrenched with an overwhelming victory in the 1953 elections. Cape liberalism, formal political liberalism's precursor (Davenport, 1987), has been characterised as "spotty" (Welsh, 1998: 5), and "Victorian" (Dugard, 1998: 29).[3]

Liberalism in South Africa currently accrues to itself both intense criticism and almost messianic adoration, as well as a range of more nuanced responses covering the territory

[2] Kirkwood posits that more accurately the "middle men" are, and always have been, "the Coloureds", in both historical and socio-economic terms (*ibid*).
[3] According to Dugard, this outdated character manifests currently in South African liberalism's concern for the rule of law as its underlying principle, whereas global liberal policies are increasingly concentrating on second-generation, social and political human rights (*ibid*).

in between these two responses. In the preface to Ironic Victory: Liberalism in post-liberation South Africa, Helen Suzman characterises liberals as "society's watchdogs" (1998: n.p.). This self-appointed guardianship status is one of the characteristics for which liberalism is both lauded and vilified, hence the title of another collection of texts which attempts to quantify, describe, and evaluate liberalism in South Africa: Watchdogs or Hypocrites? (1997). R. W. Johnson replaces the notion of "hypocrite" with that of "lapdog", as the alternative pole to the liberal "watchdog" (1998). Liberalism is thus either the guardian of human rights and an ever-vigilant voice ready to speak against state abuses of power, or a tool of the status quo which, partially through its economic interests, entrenches precisely that state power it says it seeks to moderate. How did liberalism, as a political philosophy and as a broad ideological framework, come to occupy such a contradictory position in South Africa? How does one label come to denote opposite intentions?

Liberalism as a political philosophy has a long European history, which can be traced back as far as the Magna Carta. Its fundamental and consistent core is an "insistence on the rights of the individual" (Davenport, 1987: 21). Uday Singh Mehta has drawn out the connections between liberalism as a political philosophy in England, and colonialism (1999). She defines liberalism as

> committed to securing individual liberty and human dignity through a political cast that typically involves democratic and representative institutions, the guaranty of individual rights of property, and freedom of expression, association, and conscience, all of which are taken to limit the legitimate use of the authority of the state (Mehta, 1999: 3).

This philosophy, seemingly in contradiction to its fundamental concerns, is linked to the kinds of discourses that facilitated the abuse and exploitation of colonised people; there was a "liberal justification of empire" (2). Mehta asks,

> How did thinkers who were committed to ideas of equality and liberty... see in a plurality of extant life forms little more than an occasion to assert a rational paternalism?... [H]ow did ideas of equality, liberty and fraternity lead to empire, liberticide and fratricide?... [H]ow did a commitment to toleration lead to such patronizing and unsympathetic

characterizations of the ways in which strangers lived their lives? (190).

One of Mehta's main concerns is English liberalism's inability to accommodate the strange and unfamiliar with which it was presented when it came into contact with others as a result of colonialism. Given that liberalism "was self-consciously universal as a political, ethical and epistemological creed", Mehta demonstrates how "it fashioned this creed from an intellectual tradition and experiences that were substantially European, if not almost exclusively national" (1). This is similar criticism to that detailed in chapter one against a particular kind of humanism, levelled by Belsey and Dollimore (as representative of the radical tradition of Shakespeare scholarship which reacted against a humanist Anglo-American Shakespeare): the humanist subject, masquerading as the universal, in fact is a particular, Western, class- (and gender-) implicated subject. Similarly, the effect of universalising such a subject has direct implications for colonial impositions on Others, whose experiences and humanity are not recognised because they are not seen to fit the "model" of what it means to be most fully, most perfectly, human (see also Lindqvist, 1996). This achievement, the attainment of full humanity, is seen to reside only in Kipling's "White Man".

I have drawn out some of the other possibilities inherent in humanism, however, and have attempted to demonstrate that there can be other kinds of humanism, and other uses to which it can be put as a philosophy. In its insistence on universal humanity, humanism informed the struggle against apartheid. As a part of colonial ideology, it also facilitated a particular kind of education practice, which helped to shape the subjectivities of a group or class of South Africans, and impacted on the development of writing in English that is no less South African for being influenced by western humanism. What then, of what Medalie calls humanism's "traditional bedfellow", liberalism? The status and possibilities of liberalism in South Africa are more vexed than the status and possibilities of humanism, perhaps because liberalism is more specifically tied to a political tradition, and thus easier to qualify.

Liberalism as a political philosophy in South Africa, in the words of one of its proponents, offers "as many views on the appropriate definition as there are liberals to hold them" (Jeffery, 1998: 31). This is part of the problem, enabling a critique of liberalism as woolly at best, and weak and wishy-washy at worst (Friedman, 1997 [1996]; Elphick, 1987: 78-80). Indeed, some liberals addressing the many critiques against the philosophy in South Africa point out that liberals can't be both responsible for racist social engineering (Asmal & Roberts, 1997 [1995]; Legum, 1997 [1996]; Pityana, 1997 [1996]) and too diffuse and weak to have any real effect.

David Welsh asserts, "Historically, the liberal tradition in South Africa has been a diffuse one, lacking organisational focus for much of its existence. It has never been a dominant political force"; yet, according to Welsh, liberalism has "acted with catalytic force" in South African political history, due to the ability of "liberal values... to nag" at those in power committed to illiberal practices (Welsh & Johnson, 1998: 1). Liberals fulfilled Stephen Biko's exhortation to "serve as a lubricating material so that as we change gears in trying to find a better direction for South Africa, there should be no grinding noise of metal against metal" (Qtd. Welsh: 20).[4] Thus liberals' "ability to expose the human cost of apartheid, and their unceasing championing of an alternative vision of society based on respect for human rights acted like a form of water torture on the Nationalists" (Welsh: 20). This is the liberal watchdog celebrated. Indeed, Welsh's introduction to "The liberal inheritance" is characterised by a tone which he shares with other liberal South Africans who have written about liberalism's besieged credibility in the country. The editors of the proceedings of a conference designed to address Democratic Liberalism in South Africa: Its History and Prospects, feel that "Within South Africa... [liberalism has been] largely defined by its enemies, not its friends" (Butler, Elphick & Welsh, 1987: 4).

This characteristic tone is both defensive and messianic; it responds to the feeling that liberalism has been undervalued and over- and unfairly criticised. Thus Welsh: "No

[4] Welsh does identify this as "one of [Biko's] gentler remarks about liberals" (19-20). Biko is generally

liberal would claim that liberalism was the main driving force in South Africa's transition" (19), with its implicit suggestion that there is a difference between a "true" liberal, who would not claim more than liberalism's due as a political force, and those critics of liberalism who operate from a "false" sense of what liberals are, and of what they think they are.

Behind the defensive tone is a reaction to the accusation of racism which underlies these criticisms of liberalism and liberals in South Africa (Makgoba reiterates that for him, although liberalism as a concept is not intrinsically racist, white South African liberals are [1998: 266-7]). Many white liberals are aware of Steve Biko's critique of liberals, which has informed criticism against liberalism and its practitioners (van Zyl Slabbert, 1997 [1993]: 8; Mosala, 1997 [1993]: 14), and may help to explain why black liberals are closeted (Moganedi, 1997 [1996]; Sono, 1998). Mosala, 1997 [1993] attacks black liberals as collaborators [16]). Another reason for the defensive stance sometimes taken by liberals is the ongoing accusation that liberalism is a smokescreen to protect white privilege (Husemeyer, 1997: xvi; Legum, 1997 [1996]b; Mazwai, 1997 [1996]).

At the same time, these defences of liberalism can verge on the messianic in tone, because of some proponents' insistence on liberalism as the only possible response to South Africa's political situation; as the solution to our extremely complex inheritance of difference, oppression, unfair distribution of resources, and social segregation. Underlying this insistence though, is what often sounds like white fears of being targeted by the new dispensation ("So what do black intellectuals actually mean when they use 'liberal' with such derogatory force? Is it now simply a synonym for 'white'?" [Williams, 1997 {1996}]; Davis, 1997 [1996]; Corder 1997 [1996]), thus triggering the charge of hypocritical self-interest dressed up as a concern for universal human values.

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invoked by liberals as vehemently anti- white liberal. See Laurence, 1998, and below.

The celebrated elements in the definitions (what Welsh calls the "core values" [1]) of liberalism are:

> a commitment to fundamental human rights and those procedural safeguards known as the rule of law; a commitment to constitutionalism, meaning that... certain fundamental principles must remain beyond the reach of any... (temporary) government; a belief in equality... and ... the dismantling of entrenched political, economic, and social inequalities; an emphasis on the primacy of the individual as the possessor of inalienable rights...; tolerance of conflicting viewpoints; an optimistic belief in the possibilities of the individual...; and compassion (Welsh: 2).

A definition of liberalism in South Africa is also given by the editors of Democratic Liberalism in South Africa. This definition reflected the sense of urgency of the times - the conference took place in 1986, when "Never before in South Africa had liberal values seemed more threatened... never before had the polarization between white and black seemed more severe, or the survival of the middle ground less likely" (Butler, Elphick & Welsh, 1987: 14). Characteristics of South African liberalism to emerge from the conference were: that it is "centrally concerned" with freedom, of communities as well as of individuals; that it is influenced by Christianity and "social humanitarianism" and espouses "humane values", and is accordingly part of a "moral tradition"; that it defends discriminated groups and supports affirmative action; and that it is altruistic. In addition it "defends private institutions threatened by the state", and insists on ethical political behaviour. South African liberalism has roots that extend beyond party politics, to encompass "an optimistic assessment of the human condition and its long-term prospects", despite the evidence of history (4-5). Liberalism protects against the power of the state and "asserts freedom of speech and assembly". It "affirms the rule of law" (8; the central importance of the notion of the rule of law to South African liberalism is discussed by Dugard [1998]). "Liberalism has always been concerned with the rights of minorities"; once the false Marxist perception of liberalism as economically elite is countered it is clear that liberalism also has something to offer the "black majority" (13). Liberalism has always been critical of the colonial state, and of white domination. It has a political "unity resting on... a thirst for freedom and justice", which is only strengthened

by its "theoretical pluralism" (9). This is an example of the messianic tone that tends to creep into liberals' definitions of liberalism as a creed. One of the effects of this tone, aside from the celebration of such positive and hopeful (naïve?) concepts as "ethics" and "humane, moral" behaviour in politics, is the naturalisation of the right to private property as an intrinsic part of, and equally as morally "good" as, an ethical system which celebrates and protects universal humanity. Thus the naturalised centrality of class to the core characteristics of liberalism (as of humanism) raises its head.

There is a potential conflict between liberalism's espoused commitment to addressing entrenched inequalities, and its insistence on the "individual as the possessor of inalienable rights", including the right to property. Part of apartheid's driving force was economic - the securing of cheap labour; the control of access to land, which had extreme and sustained economic, and thus social, consequences for both blacks and whites; job protectionism. The securing of capital for whites, and the establishment of a large, urbanised, black working class, was a main reason for and consequence of both pre-apartheid and formal apartheid policies. Thus, arguably, in South Africa, the right to property clashes with the need to address entrenched inequality, in that the right to property, and other economic rights, have historically been reserved along race lines. Furthermore, under capitalism broadly-defined these rights accrue along class lines. This is not to suggest that the fact of historical inequality precludes the theoretical extension of these rights to all. Rather, practically speaking, it is easy for the liberal insistence on the individual's rights to overlook the material reality of how this insistence can serve to protect his/ her historical privilege, by casting the economic history of colonised South Africa as a right, and not as exploitation. Equally, at this moment in history, it is very difficult to imagine the individual's right to the possession of property being anything other than theoretical for many, if not most, individuals in South Africa. Since poverty is still largely racialised in South Africa, possession of property runs the risk of remaining a race issue.

L. Susan Brown discusses some of the economic implications of the stress on the individual for liberal political theory in practice. She suggests that a framework which sees the defining characteristic of liberal individualism as possessive, is most useful in understanding the nature of this individualism, which is:

> characterized primarily by self-interested relationships of ownership of real property and property in the person, and the freedom of will that accompanies such ownership... liberal individualism [is] necessary to the continued existence of capitalism, [and] contribut[es] to its practical and ideological problems (1993: 15).

Brown refers to C. B. Macpherson's work on the intrinsic role of capitalism in the formation of the liberal model of the individual:

> Political society is a human contrivance for the protection of the individual's property in his person and goods, and (therefore) for the maintenance of orderly relations of exchange between individuals regarded as proprietors of themselves... Macpherson argues that in order for a full market society to exist, the right to hold private property must be affirmed, and, additionally, individuals must be free to sell their labour power to others. In order to sell labour power, it is necessary that an individual owns that labour power in the first place... [M]uch of liberal thought is devoted to legitimating, in one way or another, the capacity of individuals to be free and to own property in the person. Without this capacity, bourgeois society could not exist (29-30).

An immediate question which is raised is how "free" individuals are to sell their labour, in a system where for the majority of the society unemployment often means, at best, material hardship and at worst, starvation. Under apartheid, the notion that this freedom exists for all individuals is further complicated by the development of legislation designed to remove choice from the majority of the black working class. As Brown goes on to point out, "Competition between self-interested owners of real property and property in the person can never result in the freedom of all because it inevitably results in relations of subordination and domination" (32). In the context of South Africa's economic and political history, the reliance of this model of individualism on the individual's right to possess private property, and to profit equitably from his/ her own

labour is obviously problematic. The majority of South Africans have never been "free, or self-determining" in this way.

Thus liberalism entrenches a bourgeois subject in much the same way as humanism, which helps to account for the charges of self-interest that have been levelled against the political philosophy in South Africa. The contradiction at the heart of liberalism is that, as a philosophy which "pressed the claim of equal individual rights to self-development", it was born in "capitalist market societies, and from the beginning accepted their unconscious assumption,... 'Market maketh man.' " (Macpherson, qtd.Brown: 32-3).[5]

Liberalism's protection of ownership rights at the expense of the majority whose rights it claims to protect is a key issue for those who question liberalism's claims. The negative associations that have accrued to liberalism in South Africa contradict the positive moral assessment its proponents claim for the philosophy:

> Liberals have been characterised repeatedly as hypocritical, arrogant and patronising whites who refused to get into the trenches during the liberation struggle but want to dictate the shape of post-apartheid South Africa. The very word "liberal"... now exudes the sort of moral outrage associated with terms like "fascist", "hit squad" and "apartheid"... It is certainly regarded by many black South Africans as synonymous with "racist" (Husemeyer, 1997: xv-xvi).

There are elements of these charges that ring true. Denis Beckett, addressing the South African Liberal Students Association at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1995, discusses liberal dissatisfaction in the new South Africa. In the terms in which he describes the liberal fears for South Africa under black rule, he (inadvertently) points to the racism that underlies much South African liberalism. He also highlights how this fear

[5] Brown wishes to stress the potential within liberalism to recognise agency, and to "salvage the existential liberalism of liberal politics" (33). In some ways Brown's project for liberalism echoes my own for humanism. Brown concludes that "the revolutionary consequences which would logically flow from the complete realisation of the existentially free human individual" are incompatible with participatory democracy. Democracy, like any system of government, in its imposition of rules, will entrench relations of power between individuals (34-5). Thus liberalism, as a political system primarily concerned with the

and racism (compounded by a sense of being besieged) have become manifest under the conditions in post-apartheid South Africa:

> Logically you should expect the liberals to be really rather overjoyed at how things have turned out. After all, for nearly all our lives we all expected that this society would forever be anything but liberal. We lived in the grip of one tyranny with every expectation that it would eventually be painfully replaced by another, at least as illiberal but less able to make the bus timetables stick. Now we have in essence a liberal democratic state with the top party becoming more liberal, in all but name, each day... [B]ut in fact there is endless carping and griping... liberals... feel displaced... As [a famous liberal] told me recently: "they don't need us anymore, you know."... There is almost an inverse rank order among whites. The further Right you were in the Old SA the happier you are in the New. That makes a certain sense, if you relate reality to expectations. The ex-Right expected rape and pillage, blood and tears. What they get is a courtly gentleman in a No. 6 jersey making them weep with pride. The liberals expected that (a) post-apartheid would be better, and (b) they would be big in it. What they get is privately hijacked and politically ignored (1997 [1995]: 71-7).

Beckett here points to what R.W. Johnson has described as the "difficult and embattled position" of liberals "since 1994" (1998b: 382). Liberals find themselves accused of racism and complicity, while at the same time in possession of a history which, albeit complex and problematic, made liberalism part of the anti-apartheid struggle: "The furious insistence of the National Party (NP) that liberalism was tantamount to communism was based on the clear realization that the doctrines of non-racialism and individual rights were deeply subversive of the ethnic and racial solidarities on which the NP depended" (*ibid*: 377). This position points to liberalism's vexed identity in South Africa. As a philosophy it both informed the struggle for human rights, and belonged largely (but, importantly, not solely) to a minority group who benefitted from the withholding of human rights.

Liberalism in South Africa has not historically been the province of whites only. Perhaps white liberals today are carrying a can, the weight of which is more accurately shared out

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freedom of the individual, cannot achieve its own goals.

across race lines, and should be carried instead by a class. Given the complex history of liberalism in South Africa, as well as the neo-liberal thrust of our current economic policies (with their stress on the importance of the individual's acquisition of capital, and the protection of the right to possession of property of the person), perhaps some of the anger and frustration directed at liberals as responsible for blocking a more equitable redistribution of resources is better directed more broadly at policies that can be classed as liberal, but not as practised solely by whites. It is possible to characterise as both liberal and humanist founding members of the ANC (such as Plaatje, and Albert Luthuli [Johnson: 1998b: 377]), and some of its more recent leaders (Laurence, 1998: 49; Welsh, 1998: 7; Makgoba, 1998: 265; Elphick, 1987: 66). Plaatje's liberal humanism is not separate from his place in the trajectory I have described, which is characterised by class aspiration. This aspiration is implicated in a belief in the liberal rights of the individual to property, which is an important element in the trajectory of resistance I have outlined for this group. Sole says of the writers in the 1950s, of which the Drum crew are an integral part, that they

> formulated their protest in liberal terms... In essence the "revolutionary" reaction of the black petty-bourgeoisie to the apartheid state can be said to cloak a different ideology of domination and inequality, and to explain their interests vis-a-vis capital as a general interest (Sole, 2001: 156-7).

Another criticism levelled against liberalism is its focus on the individual, with the charge being specifically that it ignores community and is thus not suitable for most South African societies (Welsh: 2; Makgoba: 272; Bulger, 1997 [1993]: 21;). Makgoba uses the term "humanistic" to denote a community-oriented, "African" liberalism, and opposes this to a white, racist, "individualistic-dominant" liberalism which is incompatible with African thought, and which over-emphasises divisions within South African society: "Individualistic liberalism flies totally against most things that Africans have stood for and cherish - ubuntu, humanism, tolerance, the elimination of racial and class divisions, and the emphasis on society" (1998: 272. See also Ntsane, 1997 [1994]). While I do not endorse this simplified and racialised opposition (which ignores, amongst other realities,

the history of class issues raised in chapters four and five and mentioned above), what is useful is Makgoba's conceptualisation of both humanism and liberalism as able to hold multiple, and sometimes competing, definitions. In his formulation, both concepts are cast as intrinsically African. While this Africanness is problematically monolithic and idealised, it nevertheless points to ways in which the ideas can be seen to have histories and uses in South Africa that are differently nuanced from their histories and uses in Europe.

In the face of apartheid, what Welsh characterises as liberalism's optimism has been accused of naïvety (Chanaiwa, 1980; Rich, 1984) in that it has historically been the preserve of whites privileged under apartheid (although this is by no means absolutely true, as has been discussed above). Accordingly, its self-styled "compassion" has been called hypocritical or patronising (Butler, Elphick & Welsh, 1987: 4). In opposition to Welsh's celebration of liberalism's "catalytic" role in South African history, is Stephen Ntsane's reminder of the ways in which liberalism let Africans down in the 1930s. He characterises liberal trusteeship as growing into apartheid's separate development (1997 [1994]: 29-30. See also Rich, 1984: 3-7).

Liberalism in South Africa, although it presents itself as a "watchdog", is equally capable of being conceptualised as, at best, a "hypocrite". I am less concerned with whether or not liberalism as a political ideology works in South Africa, and whether its history is proud or shameful.[6] Rather, I wish to point out that it is a large subject in its own right, and cannot simply be dismissed as part of a radical critique of all things humanist - not least because it has a specific history in South Africa. Liberalism can denote ubuntu (Makgoba, 1998; Ntsane, 1997 [1994]; Foley 1997 [1996][7]). It can denote support for apartheid (Mosala, 1997 [1993].[8] Jon Qwelane describes a racist "liberal" "plot" as a

[6] I conclude that it is a bit of both. My personal opinion about political liberalism in South Africa, since it has resulted in the Democratic Alliance, is that it is rather more shameful than proud.
[7] Makgoba appears to have silently responded to Foley's "Sunday Times" Letter to the Editor in his 1998 article.
[8] "[L]iberalism... is a powerful tool by means of which black people can be paralysed into perpetual

"Shakespearian 'conspiracy' " [1997 {1995}]; to which van Zyl Slabbert replies, "there's much ado about nonsense" [1997 {1996}]). It can denote the mediating position between the two, both positively (Gevisser, 1997 [1993]; Pereira, 1997 [1996]) and negatively (Kirkwood, 1976; Bunsee, 1997). Like humanism, liberalism contains within itself the possibility for both hypocrisy and resistance to oppression. Like humanism also, liberalism is inextricably tied to class.

In accounting for the utilisation of a liberal-humanist discourse within white South Africa, and Shakespeare's role within this discourse, David Johnson demonstrates how, for him, South African English critics as a liberal group confer centralising power on themselves by mediating between the apartheid state and a liberal-humanist Shakespeare, constructed as two opposing points of reference (1996: 147). Johnson makes some important points, not least in his impulse to "question[...] the basis of Shakespeare's credentials as a resource in the struggle against racism" (147), in the service of a group who, at best, can be characterised as not suffering its brunt, and at worst as passively complicit and benefiting from its socio-legal structures. In addition, for Johnson, English-speaking South Africans in general positioned themselves as mediators between African and Afrikaner extremes, as a liberal response to the dilemma of how to act in a corrupt society (158). Shakespeare then becomes an English South African liberal (159-161). This is one vision of a South African Shakespeare in the politically crucial decade of the 50s, although Johnson's allegation (made also by Orkin, 1987 & 1993; for a response see Brimer, 1993) that English lecturers were apolitical because they did not adhere to a politicised Shakespeare seems to simplify the processes of resistance, especially in the classroom. But Johnson's framework can serve as a partial contextualisation of a Shakespearean space that is different from Sophiatown's Shakespeare, in its liberal intentions and collusion in racist practice. Shakespeare as spokesman of a cultured, liberal, South African Englishness does have a problematic history.

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slavery... it is a useful and highly valued weapon in the hands of white people... The spilt blood of BC stalwarts... and the stripes and marks inflicted indelibly on the bodies and souls of innumerable black activists, is eloquent testimony of the seriousness with which white people regard any threat to the weapon of liberalism" (14).

English liberal discourse: Maynardville

By examining two discursive constructions, which mark significant moments in its history, I offer here a snapshot of how Maynardville was formulated as an English liberal space for a compatible Shakespeare. Maynardville is a contrasting space to Drum's Sophiatown on a number of levels. Unlike the male-dominated milieu of Drum, Maynardville was founded and run by two white women, Cecilia Sonnenberg and Rene Ahrenson, whose histories are lovingly rehearsed in the booklet produced for Maynardville's 20-year anniversary, "The Maynardville Chronicle 1956-1976". The many lush descriptions of Maynardville's gardens (of which the prefacing quotations to this chapter are two examples) can be compared to Gready's description of the very different space of Sophiatown:

> Sophiatown was surrounded by a surface of uncertainty and hostility, epitomized by the threat of removal which hung over it from 1939... an uncertainty prevailed which... encouraged people to... build houses of uncertainty... [A] mutuality amongst the oppressed and a huge generosity of spirit co-existed with conditions that made it a "deplorable, sickening slum" (1990: 142).

In 1964 Maynardville produced a booklet to mark its tenth anniversary, "Maynardville 1955-1964". This booklet constructs a history for the theatre and its land, as well as a space for Maynardville in apartheid South Africa's cultural life. In his "message" which opens the booklet, the Cape Province Administrator J.N. Malan celebrates "an event in the history of the theatre in the Cape Province which merits recognition by all who have the cultural development of all sections of our population at heart" (2). The Mayor adds his accolade:

> The annual Shakespearean Open Air Festival at Maynardville has rightly become the top cultural event in our season. Citizens of Cape Town are justifiably proud that it has won world-wide recognition. Throughout the Republic and in many parts of the world, a night spent at Maynardville remains an experience of never to be forgotten beauty... Countless thousands and a generation of schoolchildren are gladly in... [the] debt [of the founders]... (3).

The language here, which silently excludes the majority on whose labour and disenfranchisement apartheid South Africa ran, is typical of the kind of discourse against which radical South African Shakespeareans have been objecting. The "never to be forgotten beauty" of the Maynardville experience becomes representative of the exclusive experiences of privileged white South Africa, which relies on denying what takes place outside its borders. The description of Maynardville's idyllic cultural and physical space becomes a palimpsest, with a darker history underneath which is written over by lush greenery, happy schoolchildren, and cultured English speakers enjoying Shakespeare.

In this formulation, Shakespeare is a powerful symbol of what-is-to-be-savoured in privileged white South Africa, as well as of what-is-to-be-gained culturally. Shakespeare stands for the goodness provided by the space that is Maynardville. An idyllic encounter with "Shakespeare", with all that such an encounter suggests about enjoying high culture and concomitant personal betterment, has to resonate in the context of the wide-scale political oppression of the 1960s, which marked an increase in the state's repressive strategies, and a movement away from resistance policies of non-violence. Umkonto We Sizwe was formed in 1961 (Karis & Carter, 1977; Lodge, 1983a; Wilson & Thompson, 1975), the same year that the National Party won its "greatest electoral victory since coming to power in 1948" in General Elections. In 1964, the year of Maynardville's tenth anniversary celebrations, and the year of the Rivonia Trial judgement which saw Mandela, Sisulu, and Mbeki sentenced to life prison terms, Mandela said: "Only two choices were left, submit or fight" (Karis & Carter, 1977: 656).

In an article in "Maynardville 1955-1964" entitled "The magic of Maynardville", a particular history of the land is enacted. It begins: "Every year, when Shakespeare comes to life at Maynardville, you walk the Oleander Avenue that leads to the heart of the magic. What do you remember – only the oleanders?" A description of the landscape follows, given in terms of a range of Shakespeare's plays. Maynardville is made simultaneously a theatre and the space of the worlds of the plays: "Or will these woods

always be peopled for you by Hermia and Lysander, Helena and Demetrius... Surely the forest of Arden will live for you forever..." Then, in a rhetorical twist which makes colonial South African history a play to be observed with as much enjoyment, and in the comfort of the Maynardville setting, as any other work by Shakespeare, the assumed reader is asked: "Or will you remember, rather, the characters who have peopled Maynardville and called it home for more than a hundred years? Will you remember uncle James Maynard?" (4). As constructed by this article, "you" are the ideal Maynardville spectator, imaginative and engaged, and familiar with the repertoire of Shakespeare's plays, ideally through having attended Maynardville every year to have seen them brought to life by its magic. By designating the founder of the property "uncle" Maynard, a familial relationship is projected which tropes the Maynardville visitor as English and white.

The booklet goes on to outline a colonial history of South Africa. The terms in which this history is constructed are familiar, belonging as they do to a discourse which has been well-mapped by post-colonial criticism. Ania Loomba explores the construction of cultural difference in early modern England in order to demonstrate how "clusters of ideas" become the "site of processes of historical layering" which rework inherited notions of difference, and become signifiers of different kinds of otherness (1996: 171; 179). While Loomba's work belongs to a tradition of Shakespeare scholarship which concerns itself with unravelling the discursive constructions of difference in early modern texts, this tradition can also be seen to be part of a larger critical awareness of the ways in which textual forms, from theatrical representation to travel literature, adventure tales, journalism and anthropology, created a framework through which "Africa" (and other colonised spaces) were constructed. It was through a European representational tradition that Europeans understood their encounters with and experiences of colonial reality. Anthony Parr offers an example of how travel narratives present intercultural contact, and how this presentation helped to shape attitudes to the foreign in Jacobean England (1996); Patrick Brantlinger has shown how a tradition of literature informed British imperial attitudes (1988); and Andrea White charts the relationship between adventure fiction and

colonial expansion (1993). While the exact causal links between discourses that encouraged imperialism and constructed colonialism's Others are difficult to quantify, Said has argued for the connection between literary culture and imperialism (1993).

"Maynardville 1955-1964" presents a history of the development of the land on which the theatre is established as " the whole story" of Maynardville, according to the Mayor's letter. "The magic of Maynardville" inscribes the English settlers in South Africa as part of an heroic history of the expansion of civilisation, through which the "White Man's Burden" was manfully shouldered, and the blessings of English civilisation brought to a harsh land:

> With the arrival of the 1820 Settlers on the shores of South Africa came the greatest single wave of English way of life and culture to this country. Many English-speaking families today take pride in tracing their origin in this country to those gallant people who uprooted themselves from their native homeland to re-establish themselves in a strange and distant land. Their arrival and settlement, mainly in the Eastern Cape, wrote a chapter fraught with tragedy. Unused to African conditions, so primitive and so arduous in those days, disaster seemed to follow disaster – droughts, floods, crop failures, cattle raids, attacks by natives against whom they were forbidden to organise punitive expeditions or even to employ as labour… Yet the majority of the families remained and struggled on to prosper and thrive in their new Country, which they came to love with a great love which can only be born through suffering. The Maynard family was one of these, and so forms a link between the Country of William Shakespeare and you, sitting here tonight in these delightful surroundings, listening to his inspired lines, and remembering ("Maynardville 1955-1964": 5).

This is a text-book example of colonial discourse working hard to construct a particular kind of space.[9] There is nostalgia for a glorious past (the refrain of "will you remember…?" is repeated through the article). This nostalgia uses Shakespeare, the embodiment of British cultural achievement and therefore civilisation, as the connection

[9] See Kirkwood's discussion of Guy Butler's "Bronze Heads" for a similar example of the use of "romantic, nostalgic identification with a partial aspect" of history in order to "bypass the contradiction" implicit in an English South African theory of culture (1976: 104).

between South African English speakers and the daring exploits of colonial England. There is the adversity of harsh clime and harsher "natives" whose deserved extermination or domestication the embattled frontiersmen are prevented from effecting (the reasons why are omitted, contributing to the sense of an irrationally harsh land amassed against the English). There is tragedy (which for a post-colonial critic reads as painfully ironic), and high adventure, endured by the tenacious Englishman for the sake of the land which he comes to earn as his own.

This set piece of colonial discourse inscribes the English settler as a pioneer and the history of the land as virginal before his arrival. The historical situation into which the 1820 settlers stepped exists in textual lacunae, behind the picture of the intrepid English adventurer. The African is present as obstacle, and as metonymically responsible for a set of "primitive" and "arduous" conditions which "in those days" before the arrival of the civilising English, dominated a "strange and distant land". The Afrikaner presence on the land and in colonial history is overwritten, and the English settler becomes the lone frontiersman. Except for the natives, who do not count, the land was empty for the taking; it was thus earned through "suffering", and the connection forged by the English colonists is passed down to the "English-speaking families today [who] take pride in tracing their origin in this country". Maynardville as a Shakespearean theatre becomes testimony to the gifts that English-speaking South Africans bestow on South Africa, as well as, crucially, proof of their right to be there.

The story of the establishment of Maynardville continues in the article, and it continues to be fraught with silences. We are told how the heroic James Mortimer Maynard, blessed by fate, created an estate through the neutral acquisition of apparently empty land:

> [T]he star of James Mortimer Maynard really rose. Business boomed, and he bought large tracts of forest in the vicinity of Wynberg and Newlands together with large properties near the city. On September 18th, 1844, he was given "a grant of pasture land"... Thus began the gardens that came to be known as Maynardville... ("Maynardville 1955-1964": 5).

The sordid and violent history of the extermination of the original inhabitants of this land is absolutely erased, as is the struggle over the right to own land which has been so crucial to South Africa's subsequent history. The kind of magical world Maynardville is credited with creating in terms of the plays it came to stage, extends to the illusion of peaceful white cultivation in the name of Christian values, in the name of James Maynard and his extended family. Thus we are told that Enid Bernard, who inherited the land, reflected "her impressively dedicated and sympathetic nature" in her spiritual admonition to "meditate every day on an abstract thought such as Divine Peace, Purity, Devotion and Worship, Charity, Kindness and Love to humanity" (9). "[H]er Rhodesian sons" gave the land to the City Council on her death in 1949, which marked the end of "one of the most romantic chapters in Cape History". This is what Kirkwood calls "the stereotyped illusions of the colonizer" (1976: 105).

It was with the arrival of "two Cape Town actresses, devotees of the theatre and of Shakespeare" that the open-air theatre was born: "Will you remember those two dauntless lovers of theatre, Rene Ahrenson and Cecilia Sonnenberg, who dared to create in dreams this theatre." Like the English settlers, these "dauntless" pioneers were possessed of "indefatigable spirit [which]... made the whole thing possible" (*ibid*). "The venture just had to be a success, which, like James Maynard's early success, would lead to progress and expansion over the years" (10). This is liberal colonial discourse at its worst, assuming that progress and expansion for one are progress and expansion for all, overwriting complex and multiple histories with its own vision of unitary goals and a homogenising cultural vision.

From the beginning Maynardville was partially dependent on schools for an audience. Johnson calls Maynardville a "development of importance in the teaching of Shakespeare in the 1950s" (1996: 171). In 1958, a "regular arrangement for schools' performances" was established. The booklet also says that the choice of play each season was related to

the school setwork: "During each season special performances are reserved for thousands of schoolchildren, and their appreciation has been unbounded". As proof, a photograph of a school audience is provided with the caption, "A typical school's night with the house packed full of eager and absorbed schoolchildren" ("Maynardville 1955-1964": 11). The booklet also includes a letter "From the Headmistress, La Rochelle Girls' High School, Paarl" endorsing the fact that the Maynardville performances are "one of the highlights" of the pupils' year. "To these boys and girls the Shakespearian characters come alive... They go back to their schools with a renewed interest in Shakespeare, some of them for the first time with a real understanding of the genius of the greatest of all English dramatists" (18).

Johnson suggests that school children do not love Maynardville performances as much as their elders would like to think (1996: 172). More than this, however, what is most noticeable about this representation of delighted and enthralled school children absorbing the best of culture in their hordes, is its exclusion of the school experiences of the majority of black South Africans in the country, which by 1964 were determined by the strictures of Bantu Education. In the context of separate education, and the philosophy behind Bantu Education, these accolades for Maynardville and the description of its effects on "thousands" of school children scream the silence of apartheid inequity.

The pictorial representations in this booklet include photographs of "Rehearsals Through the Years" and mugshots of the actors who took part in Maynardville productions. These photographs depict a whites-only space. Access to Shakespeare and to Maynardville's beauty, it seems, although couched in terms that celebrate their contributions to South African cultural development at large, is really only intended for a certain portion of the population. The African presence (as people, as humans who also have a relationship with cultural development) is as occluded in the booklet's pictorial representations of Maynardville as a South African cultural space, as it was in the depiction of the settler history which allowed for the creation of the Maynard estate.

Finally, linking the economics of apartheid with this creation of an idyllic Shakespearean space, are the adverts which end the brochure, where lines from Shakespeare's plays and sonnets adorn advertisements for everything from clothing to cigarettes, to fruit juices, to petrol (this last in verse: "for even he [Shakespeare] will privately tell that when you go to the theatre you may as well go Shell" [26]). A "Key to the quotations in the advertisements" is provided for the enculturated Maynardville visitor-reader (28).

A second booklet was produced in 1976, entitled "The Maynardville Chronicle 1956 - 1976". This booklet celebrated Maynardville's twentieth anniversary, and summarises some of the information about the development of the Maynard estate from the first booklet. It also provides a chronology, with commentary and photographs, of each season's play from the first season to the twentieth anniversary season of Hamlet. The first time there is a photo or reference to any of the other "sections of our population" mentioned by Malan ten years earlier (if we discount a photograph of a black-face Othello from the 1970 season, played by the unfortunately-named Bernard Brown), is in the section reporting on the nineteenth season's play. In 1974, albeit in a strictly regulated manner, other South Africans came to Maynardville, with the staging of Welcome Msomi's uMabatha.

uMabatha: then

Msomi himself is not mentioned in the Maynardville Chronicle's piece on uMabatha, despite the fact that he was both writer and main actor. The production is billed as "Originally produced... by Professor Elizabeth Sneddon with artistic direction by Professor Pieter Scholz". Although uMabatha first played in Durban in 1970, it was only after its success at the World Theatre Season at the Alwych Theatre, London that it was picked up by Maynardville. Accordingly, the play is billed as coming from "Peter Daubeney's London International Theatre Season" (51). Black South Africans are only

represented textually as the ignorant masses to whom theatrical culture was being brought:

> For Rene and Cecilia the sense of satisfaction, and indeed justification of their faith and work, was overwhelming, and perhaps what gave them the highest fulfillment was the reaction of the African audience. Of this John Burn wrote aptly: "Hardly a person in the packed open-air theatre knew or cared who Rene and Cecilia were: but these are the two whose tenacity, patience and faith made that performance possible" ("The Maynardville Chronicle 1956-1976": 51).

This is perhaps a reference to the difficulty in organizing the logistics of black players performing to white audiences, also perhaps delicately mentioned in the opening of the piece: "It took two years of patient work and negotiation to bring to Maynardville this production" (51). The twisted diction stresses the centrality of the location to the sense of the sentence, while avoiding a subject for the difficulty of staging uMabatha in this location.[10] The account of the ladies' joy at the response of the "African audience" does not mention that most of the Maynardville performances were barred to black African audiences, for whom a "special performance" had to be arranged.

The advertisement in "The Argus" newspaper proclaiming this special performance clearly constructs the African viewer of Shakespeare as very different from those for whom the Zulus usually danced Macbeth. While the advertisement for uMabatha which ran throughout the month of January referred viewers to book tickets either at the City Hall or at the gates an hour before performance, the advert for the "Special show for AFRICANS" which appeared below the usual advertisement on 11 January 1974 suggests, "Book now at Bill's Butchery NY110 Guguletu or City Hall, Cape Town. Holders of reserved tickets only will be admitted" (14). The image of unruly hordes arriving at the gates of the pristine magical garden and overrunning the premises is

[10] The difficult logistics of staging the production are mentioned a number of times in the newspaper reports at the time; for example the "Cape Times" of January 7 1974 reported that it took two years of negotiations to get the play to Cape Town ("Zulu play begins run": 9). In an interview with "The Argus" Rene Ahrenson confirms that "We have just obtained all the necessary permission and co-operation to stage the play again next year" ("uMabatha tickets all sold", "City Late" January 25 1974: 8).

encoded in the reminder of limited access, which is not repeated anywhere else in the paper's coverage of the show.

Limited access for South Africans who were not white erupts as an issue in a letter to the Editor on 14 January, which is entitled "Seating Plans unfair to Blacks":

> I booked four tickets for the play UmaBatha [sic] at Maynardville. As a Black man, I feel very annoyed at the way the seats are situated for Black patrons. In fact, it is outrageous the way our people are culturally exploited... [W]hy [are] our seats... situated at the back of the theatre... Culture cannot be divided by a rope, separate sections or characteristic "black smells"... Umabatha [sic] is a drama of common human emotions. Therefore there must be no barrier which has a psychological effect on the Black members of the audience, preventing them from becoming emotionally involved in the play. This is a drama of great cultural value and it is staged by Black players who are native to this country. It must not be staged before a divided audience. It should draw us together and be appreciated and criticised as an entity ("The Argus" January 14 1974: 10).

The writer of this letter, D.C. October, expresses a hope that the power of "cultural value" implicit in a play that bears a relation to Shakespeare and that thus speaks of "common human emotions", will overcome the cultural exploitation of "our people". The racial separation he concedes in this phrase is challenged by his insistence that black audience members respond to the same cultural stimuli as white audiences. Here a humanist Shakespeare is being invoked to insist on the shared humanity of black theatre-goers.

October's identification of black audiences with black performers, in an attempt to make his point about the insult that unequal access embodies, is undermined by a dialogue about racial identity and identification which is set up by the response printed underneath the letter. Enforcing apartheid categories as emphatically as he enforces apartheid laws, a "spokesman for the Town Clerk's office" replies:

> To enable Coloured people to attend the show at Maynardville the lessees... had to apply to the Department of Community Development for a permit in terms of the Act. In granting the permit the department would impose certain conditions in regard to seating.

Responding presumably to his name, which "sounds" "coloured" (although the fact that October is not referring to the "special performance for Africans" as is obvious by the letter's date, might also have led to the assumption that the writer of the letter was "coloured" and not "black"), the "spokesman" refuses October's assertion of blackness. He ignores October's appeal to universal humanity, and the concomitant right to equal access to "culture"; instead, the spokesman relies on the inviolability of the law of separate seating, at the same time reminding October that special permission is necessary for any coloured presence at all.

The experience of life for black South Africans outside of Maynardville's magic space is mentioned in "The Maynardville Chronicle" in a way which makes it clear that "African" life is naturalised as different, as something other to the lives Maynardville was built to enrich. In passing, the "everyday" work done by the cast of uMabatha is mentioned; African labour belongs to a specific sphere, which cannot include full-time performance. Ironically this is in the same sentence as a complacent assertion of racial harmony:

> Sold out long before the season ended, and four weeks was the limit because many cast members could no longer be spared from their everyday full-time employment in Durban, it [uMabatha] created a tidal wave of enthusiasm, and must be seen also as a milestone on the road of relaxed and naturally friendly race relations (51).

This African reality outside of the borders of Maynardville, when put together with the newspaper articles that appeared concurrently with uMabatha's run, shows up a Shakespeare who is reserved for whites, and who is used to emphasise Zulu (and from there, black South African) otherness. uMabatha is used to construct discursively an "authentic" picturesque Zuluness which stands for an Africanness, against which an urbane and civilised "European" (meaning, in apartheid South African terms, white)

Shakespeare can be placed. The African use of Shakespeare expressed in the production is press-ganged through the violence of racist representation into creating a binary: this whites-only Shakespeare is delighted at the performance of African tribal otherness put on in his image, and for his homage.

The month that uMabatha began, January 1974, the two longest-running Cape Town dailies (Shaw, 1987) ran a number of features and articles on the play and its players. Ian Forsyth, reviewing the play for "The Cape Times", calls it a "vibrant theatrical experience" but seems to have experienced the spectacle as unnerving. He finds the "sound of Zulu... terrifyingly harsh", the "Sangomas (Witch Doctors)... evil and frightening", and Maynardville as a venue so well-suited to the performance that "one suspects that UmaBatha played in a smallish theatre, with its dancers – quite magnificent they were - could become really quite frightening" ("Cape Times" January 9 1974: 6). His rave review reassures "anybody who has the remotest doubt about what has been described... as a Zulu Macbeth... because the language happens to be Zulu should rapidly lose this doubt... It is unnecessary to be able to understand Zulu". The universal accessibility of Shakespeare's themes is affirmed, while what "happens to be Zulu" is what gives the experience its frisson of excitement. Throughout its review history, the accessibility of uMabatha is constantly reinscribed as evidence of the universality of "Shakespeare's themes". Ambition, greed, love, all human traits, originate with and belong to, Shakespeare. The Africans who enact these emotions are demonstrating Shakespeare's fundamental humanity, not their own. This weighting in favour of Shakespeare cannot be comfortably consigned to the apartheid past, as the discussion of more recent reviews of uMabatha demonstrates below.

In 1974, too, the stress on how naturally Macbeth translates into a Zulu version is at once proof of Shakespeare's genius, and reflective of a concern with the authenticity of the experience of "Zulu culture".[11] "The Argus" reviewer at the time, like his "Cape Times"

[11] The concern with authenticity is not reflected in a sustained attempt to spell the name of the play

counterpart, similarly considers the play a "theatrical triumph"; "exotic and startling". The adjectival terms in which he describes the experience are telling:

> [T]he story of Macbeth, who was a primitive, warring, bloodthirsty and ambitious Scottish chief, transposes easily and *naturally* to the days of the tribal Zulu warrior. Ambition, revenge, blood, courage, nobility, a strong belief in a hierarchical society and traditional values... - these fit themselves *naturally* into noble Zulu folklore... It all sounds very fine and stirring... with rolling cadences of a *natural* euphony... There is a tremendous cast... they all play together with what must be an *instinctive* sense of ensemble... Macduff... was a little masterpiece of... *genuine* anguish...The Weird Sisters are very weird and very *credible*, crouching half-naked over their pot...[the] production has brought something new and vivid to Cape Town theatre (emphasis added. 9 January: 12).

The stress on nature serves to confirm the authenticity of the offered experience to gaze at, and thus consume, a performance of Zuluness: the "half-naked" women are "very credible"; the play is both "exotic" and "genuine". It also plays on the racist association of blacks with nature. This description ascribes to "black culture" a "natural euphony", an "instinctive sense of ensemble", which stresses two stereotypes: that blacks are musical, and that they operate communally. There is another sense in which Macbeth "naturally" translates into the Zulu. David Schalkwyk has pointed out to me that it is not coincidental that Macbeth, of all Shakespeare's plays, should so successfully and enduringly function as an "African" cultural export. Macbeth, set as it is in the history of one of England's Others (the Scottish barbarians), is a drama of warriors, battles, bloodshed, and black magic. This is in contrast to the more insistently cerebral context of, for example, Hamlet. Schalkwyk suggests that the enormously popular "Zulu Macbeth" has never been packaged together with a "Zulu Hamlet" because the associations of bloodthirstiness, superstition, violence, and clannishness that accrue to Macbeth suit "Western" stereotypes of the "African". These translate easily into the kind of physical and aural spectacle of Africanness Msomi continues to offer through uMabatha, as will be discussed below. Pointing to the representational strategies available to "Africa", Lesego Rampolokeng prefaces his recent play Fanon's Children (2002) with the epitaph:

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correctly, as will be clear in the quoted extracts.

"Beyond the song and dance, and the sound of gunfire, the African continent is inarticulate" (allafrica.com/stories/200211060320.html).

The "naturalness" both of the Zulu work and of its performers, became a theme dominant in the representation of the original Maynardville production in the papers. In an article run in its "Focus on Women" section about the play's costuming,[12] the "Cape Times" reflects a concern with authenticity which is understood in terms of the category "tribal." The article is called "Beads that tell a story": "They're all authentically tribal... Individual members of the cast have contributed a piece or two of their own..." And this authenticity of costuming is linked to an authenticity of behaviour:

> All in all the backstage scene at Maynardville is as uncomplicated as any producer could wish for. Instead of a clutter of greasepaint make-up and clothes there are only neat little rows of black cloth – the cowhide skirts... and bundles of bead trimmings. Nothing more. When the cast is on stage there's nothing happening backstage either – no call boys, no prompt, no stage manager, no conductor. Everyone knows where to move and when, Mrs Stuart said. "They have a wonderful sense of theatre and timing. There's no script and if anyone changes his or her lines there's no panicking. They simply carry on" ("Cape Times" January 10 1974: 5).

These performers are not actors in what is understood to be the Shakespearean sense. They are doing what comes "naturally." This is augmented by a photograph of Mrs. Ntombi Nkosi Mhlongo, "Lady MacDuff", who is pictured in her "splendid display of beads... In real life Mrs Mhlongo is an assistant in a Durban shop." Mrs. Mhlongo's "real life" does not include Shakespeare; she is not "really" an actor.

What it might mean to come to terms with Zulu authenticity takes on a voyeuristic quality that extends beyond the pleasures of watching "natural" Zulu dancing and dress. There is

[12] Both "The Argus" and "The Cape Times" seem to have considered aspects of the production and its history to be of interest specifically to women. "The Argus" ran a story in "The Argus Women's Supplement" on 3 January, one of two that ran before the play had opened ("UmaBatha": 2). A comparison of the lives of the women who acted in uMabatha, as detailed in "The Argus", with the lives of Sonnenberg and Ahrenson as provided by "The Maynardville Chronicle" is an exercise in reviewing the

a degree of prurience, couched in terms of a patronising cultural relativism, reflected in the debate the play caused about the morality of bare African breasts on stage. In one article, "Bare breasts culture, say UmaBatha cast", black breasts become the embodiment of Zulu values. Msomi is quoted as saying, "We have our values which we treasure greatly and bare breasts are highly valued by the Zulu people" ("Cape Times", January 26 1974: 11). The article continues:

> Thembi Mtshali, a member of the chorus, told me: 'Bare breasts are our custom and so they don't worry us.' When I spoke to her she was dressed in trendy gear which included a fashionable denim jacket...
>
> NO CONFLICT
>
> She admitted that, although she saw herself as a Westernized or urbanized African woman (when not acting in UmaBatha she works as a shop assistant in a department store in Durban), she felt no moral conflict about performing before a White South African audience in the costume of her tribal ancestors...
>
> Mrs. Mhlongo said the UmaBatha cast were "deeply interested" in presenting their history and customs in their purity for White South Africans to see.

Breasts become symbolic of "the Zulu culture" and, in a verbal slippage, become a "form of dress", highlighting the exotic, Othered status of that primitive and naked thing, "Zulu culture": "A prominent Cape Town academic, Dr David Welsh, who is senior lecturer in Comparative African Government and Law at the University of Cape Town, said that bare breasts had never been considered erotic among Bantu-speaking people. They were traditionally a natural form of dress among the Zulu people" (11). The use of "pure" Zulu culture, reified into something to be presented for the edification of white audiences both in uMabatha and in this article, becomes a comment on the difference of Africans. The article's stated purpose, to educate white audiences on how to "read" the women's bare breasts, slips into a display of exoticised female Otherness in its accompanying photograph of Daisy Dumakude, (she is captioned "Lady Macbeth"; her character's name is Kamadonsela) "in full traditional regalia", bare breasted.

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contrasts of apartheid South Africa.

The article continues to quote the translating voice of Western reason, the white male academic who has studied this object called "Zulu culture", in order to reassure the white reader that bare breasts are not a sign of moral degeneracy amongst the natives: "Dr Welsh added that strict rules regarding premarital sex, particularly among the Zulu people, were characteristic of most African societies. 'In fact, the amount of "immorality" within the tribal framework was always very limited.' " The Zulus, then, are not covertly behaving badly when they perform - revert to - their "natural" "traditional" culture on stage.

Patricia Williams, who wrote on the subject for "The Argus", seems less convinced. She takes up the debate with a headline that reads, "Censors have two views on nudity" which begins: "The anomalies of South African censorship are being shown up pointedly by the bare-breasted frolicking of 10 women before affluent White audiences":

> ...Because they are Black (the badly reasoned excuse that this is the traditional way of African tribal life is ridiculous when considering the Westernisation of many of the Zulu women in the cast), these women may perform in the most vigorous and exotic manner while the audience, including a number of prominent Nationalists when I saw it, applauded enthusiastically. The tribal dances are fulsome and natural, but it could be argued that they are erotic...("The Argus" January 14 1974: 5).

This article is also accompanied by a picture of Daisy Dumakude, with the caption: "A beaded and bare-breasted Lady Macbeth was perhaps not what Shakespeare intended." A reply was sent as a "Letter to the Editor" the following week:

> Having just read Patricia Williams's article on semi-nudity in the Zulu play uMabatha... I must reason that she is suffering from the 'Liberalism Bug' which unfortunately afflicts certain members of the Press from time to time. The whole point is that the difference between Europeans and Zulus cannot merely be allied to the colour of their skin as she would have us believe...

Williams replies tartly, "the Zulus playing in uMabatha are urbanised and the principle is exactly the same as if they were Whites" ("More to Nudity than Skin Colour", "The

Argus" January 21: 13). What this discussion reveals (the second part to it is Williams' objection that a play set in the Garden of Eden with a topless white Eve was banned whereas uMabatha was not, and "where could nakedness be more traditional than there [the garden of Eden]?" ["The Argus" January 14 1974: 5]) is the concern with authentic tradition, which belongs to blacks, as whites have culture. When is nudity not nudity, and when should whites not be titillated by it? When is a Zulu woman traditional enough for her body to become "traditional dress"? When she is bare breasted, as long as her breasts are "black"? Even if she ordinarily wears a denim jacket? The ways in which uMabatha represents "Zulu tradition", in order to commodify a brand of "Africanness", have become more complex in recent performances; this will be addressed below.

The coverage of the production's reception, especially in "The Argus", attributes to Msomi a didactic hope for uMabatha which sounds similar to Plaatje's strategic use of Shakespeare for Setswana. While many of the articles that discuss the play's development stress its white benefactor, Elizabeth Sneddon ("Women's Argus Supplement", "UmaBatha" 3 January: 2; "Weekend Argus", "The Secret Story Behind Umabatha" 26 January: 2), Msomi's intentions for his production are also represented. Mid-way through the play's extremely successful run (it played to sold-out houses as early as from January 9, the day after it opened and by 23 January it was sold out until the 28th, with only a "few seats left" until 2 February ["The Argus" 23 January: 14]) the "Weekend Argus" ran a story which focused on Welcome Msomi:

> 'uMabatha,' he says 'proves that the things we have got, such as our cultural background, music and so on are not inferior... this is something people in this country never thought we could do...' Mr Msomi says uMabatha and the coming film [Makhoba no Thembi, a Zulu Romeo and Juliet, which Msomi is reported as having written] 'might cause more people to learn Zulu. There are surely parts in uMabatha where a person will say to himself: "I wish I knew what he said then", and wished he had a Zulu sitting next to him to tell him what it was all about.'[13]

[13] Msomi mentioned to an American reviewer of uMabatha in 1997 that he "envisions an updated, multicultural, future production of the musical "West Side Story," complete with Asian dancing, Hispanic music and black gospel vocals" (www.dailybruin.ucla.edu/DB/issues/97/10.01/ae.Umabatha.html).

Given the separate performances for some blacks, and separate seating for others, Msomi's imaginative construction of a white audience member desiring a Zulu neighbour is pointed. "The Cape Times" also mentions that:

> Mr Msomi said one 'extremely valuable' side effect of UmaBatha's impact was the reaction it had caused among White South Africans. 'Most of them show gross ignorance of the different African cultures in South Africa but, through UmaBatha, many white South Africans are learning to appreciate at least the Zulu culture'. Mr Msomi said he had already had several inquiries from White people who wanted to learn the Zulu language ("Bare breasts culture" January 26 1974).

In "The Maynardville Chronicle 1956-1976" the last section of the booklet is dedicated to accolades for the theatre. Philip Birkinshaw, "one of the actors who has frequently appeared at Maynardville and who doubtless speaks for more people than himself" is credited with a eulogy to Maynardville which lovingly folds English (embodied by "Shakespeare's verse") into the Cape landscape:

> The other thing is the English language, fated to be my special thing. To speak it anywhere has always been deeply gratifying to me, and in the shadow of this great mountain, intimately so. The exhibitionism of acting I can do without, even the money; but the glory of the language always grabs me. There seems a special affinity between them at Maynardville. I never look at the majesty, the verdancy, the benison of the mountain without thinking what an image it is of Shakespeare's verse. And Shakespeare brings his own something to it, of course, the most articulate civilized moment since Greece. He is the lord of my language and the spirit of my country and to serve them both in South Africa at Maynardville I count as a great honour (54).

This description of a white, English man's experience of Maynardville contrasts to what we can imagine Msomi's experience of Maynardville was, especially given the erasure in this booklet of any reference to his authorship of uMabatha. This erasure was effected, no doubt, in order to stress the Shakespearean authorship of the play. There was no room for an African author at Maynardville, which, in its pristine, cultivated beauty, is constructed as a space for a Shakespeare who is different from a black, tribal South African playwright. The cultivated landscape, fundamentally African and simultaneously

domesticated to represent English, is appropriated for Shakespeare partly by the erasure of African people from the landscape.

Birkinshaw's secure cultural position encompasses his certainty about the status of English, especially as spoken by Shakespeare, and his free access to the landscape of Maynardville. Clearly in this piece of writing, the landscape of Maynardville and its surrounds are English - there is "a special affinity" between the "glory" of English and Table Mountain. This white Englishman's cultural identity and the experience of Shakespeare, Maynardville, the world, that is encoded within its bounds stand in contrast to Msomi's reported hopes for the elevation of Zulu language and culture, through controlled and limited access to the white stage and the white press. Birkinshaw can speak of choosing to "do[...] without" the opportunity to act; the cast of UMabatha are allowed the opportunity to act as a break from their "real jobs", and only with special permission to occupy the space at Maynardville. The best they can hope to be through this lens is a group of "authentic" Zulus showing they can also "do" Shakespeare.

This analysis is not meant to suggest that the representations of Msomi and the cast of uMabatha in the English-language newspapers accurately reflect their personal experiences of performing at Maynardville. Instead, I hope to have provided a snapshot of another way in which Shakespeare has been used in South Africa, to point to the fact that, while exploring what has been characterised in this thesis as a resisting, transformed South African Shakespeare, we should not lose sight of the ways in which "he" has been mobilized in the name of a "liberal" English culture that itself establishes an exclusionary and weighted binary with "African" "tribalism". The relationship between a Shakespeare recognised as belonging to the "West", and African-ness as embodied by uMabatha, continues to be vexed.

uMabatha: now

After the Maynardville production, uMabatha toured America, where Msomi remained in exile for thirteen years ("All the world's a stage for Welcome Msomi's business". Business Times, "Sunday Times" 1997 [www.btimes,co.za/97/0302/newsm/ newsm.htm]; Hallberg, 2001: 85). uMabatha was revived in Johannesburg in 1995, ran in Durban in 1996 (www.durbanet.co.za/darts/ dart9607/drama1.htm), and went to the new Globe Theatre in London, after which it toured America in 1997. Most recently, it opened the Celebrate South Africa festival in London in 2001.

A review of the discourses invoked in the press by the 1997 and 2001 performances in South Africa, American and England, reveals that Msomi can be placed on the trajectory of South African users of Shakespeare outlined in this thesis. At the same time, the ways in which Shakespeare continues to be used as a marker of "liberal", "humanist" Western culture (concerned with universal humanity) which has a problematic relationship with what is constructed as a generically "African" tradition are also revealed. Class interests, especially in terms of the accumulation of different kinds of capital, continue to play a role. Msomi's career illustrates the potential for economic advancement made possible in part by tourism in the "new" South Africa, which generates profit for those who can package "authentic" South Africanness.[14]

One one level, it seems Msomi is still using Shakespeare to promote the accessibility of Zulu-ness, and from there perhaps the basic humanity of Africans: " 'I took Shakespearean themes and put them in the Zulu idiom. It is the story of Zulu culture,' Msomi maintains" (www.dailybruin.ucla.edu/DB/issues/97/10.01/ae. Umabatha.html); "I hope American audiences go away more familiar with the terms of Zulu culture... People in countries around the world should see what they have missed in not sharing their different cultural experiences" ("Beware the Izangoma". Doug Hoehn.

[14] For a much less cynical reading of the ways in which uMabatha uses culture, one which relies on undefined and simplistic notions of "authentic" "tradition", and of struggle in South Africa, see Hallberg,

www.columbusalive.com /1997/19971008/theatre.html); "All Shakespeare's plays lend themselves well to Zulu because he was a storyteller and Zulu is also a storyteller's language" ("MacZulu creates a stir in Britain's cultural cauldron". Justice Malala. "Sunday Times" 29 April 2001). Accordingly (missing his emphasis), Hallberg comments, "Msomi does not believe in cultural boundaries" (2001: 75).

However, Msomi's desire to represent Zulu culture in this way to "people in countries around the world" has not always been well-received. uMabatha has been placed within a tradition of sentimentalised representations of "Black art", directed at whites. Instead of being accurate or authentic, such representations are deformed by commercial interests and by prejudice (McLuskie, 1999: 156). McLuskie traces the development of the "black musical" genre from King Kong, a production set in Sophiatown, for which Todd Matshikiza wrote the music. Thus uMabatha is situated in a generic tradition whose roots are in Sophiatown. Msomi is implicated in a use of Shakespeare which is part of a trajectory encompassing the Drum writers, including Matshikiza.

Msomi also joins the trajectory traced by South African uses of Shakespeare by sharing an emblematic moment in the life of many aspiring (male) African artists. In this typical narrative, an encounter with Shakespeare functions as a catalyst, propelling the young man into the realm of "culture" (see chapter four above). In a review of one of the 2001 Globe performances in the "Sunday Times", Justice Malala retells this story: Msomi declaimed from Shakespeare - Mark Antony's funeral speech - to "a crowd of his friends at St Christopher's school in Swaziland... Msomi recalls, 'After my friends' applause that day I knew that I would not be a doctor, as my parents wanted me to be.' " ("Sunday Times" 29 April 2001). Similarly: "An aspirant doctor when he was growing up, it all changed when he received a standing ovation for his part in a Shakespeare play" ("All the world's a stage for Welcome Msomi's business". "Business Times" [www.btimes.co.za/97/0302/newsm/newsm.htm]).

2001.

This 1997 article provides a profile of Msomi, age 54:

> Title: Chief executive of Sasani Investments... Achievements: putting together the presidential inauguration ceremony... The idea behind Sasani was to 'carry on ideas to market the richness of our culture both here and overseas, much like Hollywood has marketed America to the rest of the world'.

uMabatha, unmentioned here, is the vehicle for a successful career which spans, and unites, politics, business, and the performance of culture. After his work on uMabatha, and the presidential inauguration ceremony, Msomi was communications advisor to the ANC during the 1994 elections (Hallberg, 2001: 77; McLuskie, 1999: 157). His theatrical career extends beyond uMabatha ("When working together works" "The Star". January 28 1999). His ability to combine producing, politics, and finance, culminated in his being named chair of the board of the Pretoria State Theatre by Minister of Arts and Culture Ben Ngubane in 2000 ("New board formed for State Theatre". Garalt MacLiam. "The Star" July 11 2000). MacLiam comments that Msomi's appointment "will pretty well guarantee[...] that both sound business principles and the pressing need for transformation will guide the board's deliberations."

Malala is equally approving of Msomi's move into the industry of culture:

> Msomi is thinking of starting a company that will package South African cultures as a brand that can be sold elsewhere in the world. 'We need to talk all these things and ask how we get them to appeal to overseas markets... what we need is to create this South Africanness brand. There is a huge potential and all we have to do is stop copying other countries' work and tap our own uniqueness' ("MacZulu creates a stir in Britain's cultural cauldron" "Sunday Times" 29 April 2001.)

Despite the constant billing of uMabatha as "the Zulu Macbeth", and as a "translation", Msomi doesn't seem to understand his work as primarily derivative. uMabatha is an expression of "our own uniqueness". What is most useful about this uniquely South African product, however, is its marketability, and Msomi is explicit about his intention to brand "South Africanness". Perhaps most noteworthy is Msomi's tone. He does not view the commodification of South Africanness negatively, a fact which points to one of

the ongoing intentions informing uMabatha. During the play's initial Maynardville run, "Zulu culture" was packaged for white South Africans. More recently, uMabatha has become a vehicle for the packaging of "South Africanness" to the world cultural market. The shift in socio-political context enables this expansion from the domestic to the international. The end of apartheid and the growth of globalisation are intrinsic to this process. In a neo-liberal, post-apartheid South Africa striving to enter a globalised economy and compete in world markets, "culture" becomes an important national commodity - as long as it is accessible to outsiders. This means that notions of the "African" and the "South African" must be recognisable to the tourists whose expectations of the exotic must be met in order for the product to sell.

McLuskie comments on the levels of cultural commodification that adhere to the play's more recent performances when she notes her post-colonial critic's "embarrassment" at the spectacle of "The cast... dressed in leather skirts and furry leggings" (1999: 154). Breasts are still note-worthy, although this time the "traditional culture" they denote is embarrassing to the educated po-co critic:

> The performance of *Umabatha* was definitely Shakespeare without his language... but... its style of performance was too firmly tied to Zulu drumming and dancing to demystify the social relations of Shakespeare performance in the post-colonial world. Part of the problem was the style. Bare-breasted women with beaded hair and dancing warriors in furry leggings are a slightly embarrassing image of Africa for the sophisticated consumer of post-colonial Shakespeare... (155)

While McLuskie is pointing to the problematic "tribal" image of "Africa" that Msomi could be described as selling back to the West, this assessment presents its own difficulties. As well as filtering South Africanness through a tourist lens, Msomi is *also* presenting elements of how people actually did and do live. McLuskie's desire for the play to "demystify the social relations of Shakespeare performance in the post-colonial world" once again weights primary meaning in the West's favour. uMabatha becomes most valuable for what it reveals of post-colonial, secondary, responses to Shakespeare, not as a cultural expression in its own right. Part of the point is that the play's

commodification of "African cultural expression" reduces or negates its capacity to represent "Zulu-ness". Part of the problem is how to approach "Zulu-ness" at all, given the discursive histories of colonialism, apartheid, nationalism, and post-colonialism. A dual awareness that the commodification of Zulu-ness is problematic, and that a refusal of African agency is equally problematic, is compounded when McLuskie notes that her sophisticated embarrassment is not shared by the majority of the audience: "the young, mostly (but not exclusively) white audience at the Globe lapped it up. As the *Guardian* reviewer put it, this was 'a form of tourist theatre which invites us to celebrate the exotic and treat it as a photo opportunity' " (155).

How then do we reconcile Msomi's unashamed agenda to market South Africanness with the Western post-colonial critic's embarrassment at being asked to be a tourist in his representation of "Africa"? Msomi, who by this stage is a successful businessman working for the ruling party, is quoted approvingly by a black journalist with regards to his plans to sell a new South Africanness. The journalist's approval at least partially adheres to Msomi's sense that South Africanness is something worth selling. Commodity value becomes an emblem of pride. This is particularly noteworthy given the history of the "cultural cringe" that was partially responsible for the elevation of Shakespeare as the emblem of South African English culture.[15] Msomi's pride is also significant given the construction of "African tradition" as something Other to (something worth less than) Culture:

> 'We seem not to understand that our uniqueness is what people really appreciate about us,' says Msomi, for whom this means our languages and their idiosyncrasies. 'It is all about changing people's mindsets about themselves, about their language. Why should we be ashamed of

[15] McLuskie notes, "In South Africa, as elsewhere, 'Shakespeare' was overdetermined as an emblem of human universality but in South Africa in particular, 'Shakespeare' was also associated with the cultural pretensions of the settler community" [1999: 157]. See also Jean Meiring's review from Magdalen College, Oxford, for an example of a cultural cringe: "South Africans cringe culturally at the drop of a hat. To us, genuflecting to supposedly more sophisticated, urbane foreigners is a knee-jerk reaction… it is clear that this is no Zulu *Macbeth*. Its creator, Welcome Msomi, himself admitted that it… is no re-writing of the Shakespeare play… Is our cultural heritage, such as it is, so threadbare that a South African play cannot stand alone without a gilded, curlicued European frame or *point of reference*?" (http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sasio/umabatha_review..html).

> what we are?' (Malala, "MacZulu creates a stir in Britain's cultural cauldron" "Sunday Times" 29 April 2001).

Elsewhere Msomi links cultural worth to marketability, on which survival depends: " 'It dawned on me what we had was something rich and that it needed to be marketed and preserved' " (Qtd. Hallberg, 2001: 84). In the revival of uMabatha, then, Msomi is not only using Shakespeare as packaging for Zulu culture. What he is selling is now more directly commercial, and its profit carries complex implications in a global cultural market. This can be seen in the different versions of how and why uMabatha was written and revived which circulate in the different countries, and which could be read as different packaging of the product for different markets. According to the South African "Sunday Times",

> Umabatha, which he wrote over three feverish nights in 1969, has been giving him the world's applause for 30 years... 'Umabatha just keeps on going,' he says, 'because it's all about universal themes. I have never changed a thing since I wrote it, and the only thing that has changed is the cast.' " (Malala. "MacZulu creates a stir in Britain's cultural cauldron" "Sunday Times" 29 April 2001.)

However, four years previously, a South African journalist reported of the 1997 America tour that: "Umabatha: The Zulu Macbeth... is a lavishly revised and expanded version... [of the play] first performed more than 25 years ago." ("Good to be in the world again": June 6 1997 "Cape Times"). The American tour is billed as "lavishly revised and expanded"; as a new and improved version, a more modern product. The American reviews also circulate in most detail, and most repetitively, the fact that Mandela requested the revival, a common-sensical endorsement of this product as the "real thing" (www.today.ucla.edu/html/970929CentreKicks.htm; www.dailybruin.ucla.edu/DB/issues /97/10.01/ae.Umabatha.html).

For its overseas reviewers, especially in America, uMabatha functions as the "real thing" in an additional manner. It becomes emblematic of Africanness, and of proud Africanness. In a progression which allows Msomi, via "the Zulus", to stand for all "the African nations", a reviewer at UCLA commented:

> When South African playwright/ director Welcome Msomi set out to write an ambitious drama about the history of his people, the Zulus, he was bluntly told that a play focusing on the African nations would never succeed. But Msomi believed fervently that he could not only create such a drama, but base this colorful history of the Zulus on Shakespeare's universal tale of intrigue, greed and murder, 'Macbeth' (" Center Kicks Off With 'Zulu Macbeth' www.today.ucla.edu/html/70929 CentreKicks .html).

Msomi was at UCLA to lecture on the origins of "what is being hailed as South Africa's only cultural classic". This remarkable assertion is even more startling for originating from within a university's cultural studies programme, which can unproblematically endorse notions of authenticity, in terms that reinscribe the picturesque: "With vividly hued costumes and intricately designed African drums, 'Umabatha: The Zulu Macbeth' seeks Zulu authenticity in style, culture and history" (www.dailybruin.ucla.edu/DB/issues /97/10.01/ae.Umabatha.html).

The reason for this academic construction of uMabatha as uniquely and authentically South African is suggested by another American university's utilisation of the play. Binghamton University used the occasion of the play's performance to offer a thematised semester's work on "how the regions of the world influence and interact with one another", because "This really shows how Shakespeare was experienced in Africa and also gives us a chance... to share the African experience" ("Zulu Macbeth performance to highlight general education focus on global perspective" inside.binghamton.edu/ September-October/Sept-4-97/Zulu.html).[16] The "Zulu Macbeth" is authorised to stand for the entire "African experience" of Shakespeare. This metonymy is continued in the syntax of a description where "the Zulu nation" is made equivalent to French nationality: "The 1997-98... season will bring to the stage at Binghamton University an entire world of entertainment including... a French ballet company..., and the sight, sound and spectacle of the Zulu nation" (*ibid*).

[16] Ali Mazrui was involved in this project, giving lectures as part of the programme.

As proof of the play's authenticity, Msomi invokes its ability to "remind" people of who they are, as he provides details of plans to present to real Africans the authentic Africanness they have lost. Authentic Africanness is contained in uMabatha, and can be redistributed to the underprivileged: " 'We plan to go to the more rural areas of Africa... to share this culture and history. I believe when a nation loses its soul, it loses its foundation. People lose something about themselves,' Msomi says" (www.dailybruin .ucla.edu/DB/issues/97/10.01/ae.Umabatha.html). This construction of what Msomi goes on to describe as the play's "legacy" makes its American audiences feel that they are contributing to the renewal of African pride by supporting the show.

Msomi is literally selling Africanness to a Western public. As well as standing for a commodification of Africanness in general, this commodification of Zulu-ness becomes a commodification of "new" South Africanness in particular. McLuskie suggests that "The Guardian" reviewer is hoping for "an African Shakespeare which would not attract tourists and would offer a more discerning audience an insight into the real social and political relations of contemporary South Africa" (155). Counterposed to this commodified Africanness in "The Guardian" review, is the "real" experience of South Africanness, which becomes an authentic comment on modern African life, which in turn becomes the same thing as modern South African life (as though the continent were reducible to one country). The ANC has economic and political investments in promoting this South Africanness-as-Africanness, which would explain Mandela's role in promoting the authenticity of the production overseas.

In its press release for the Celebrate South Africa festival, the promotion of "Today's South Africa" is cited as the rationale for the festival. Celebrate South Africa will present the "new nation" on the "world stage" by showcasing examples of its cultural expression:

> Six weeks of festivities... will bring the best of South African singers, dancers, musicians, actors, artists, filmmakers and craftspeople into the heart of the capital as Londoners are invited to share the vitality and dynamism of a new nation in the making. South Africa has emerged on the world stage as a unique society in the process of transformation. Yet it still remains a mystery to many people who live outside of the

> country. Today's South Africa is so much more... (5 April 2001 "London explodes with a fusion of South African Talent" www.music.org.za/ news/celebrateSA.htm).

The desire to introduce the world to the spectacle of the new South Africa might include the hope that it will pay for its ticket. The "ANC Daily News" of 6 April 2001 reports that the Celebrate South Africa campaign is "aimed at creating markets for rural artists..." (www.anc.org.za/anc/newsbrief/2001/news0406.txt). Billed as a "highlight" of the festival is "classic Shakespeare in the form of Welcome Msomi's critically acclaimed production Umabatha - the Zulu Macbeth at Shakespeare's Globe". In a reversal of the ownership ascribed in the 1974 Maynardville production, Msomi's role in the play's existence is part of its authenticity as a South African artifact.

In a packaging of history which omits the kind of English colonialism lurking in the Maynardville pamphlets, as well as the Thatcher government's support for the Nationalist government in the 1980s, the press release adds, with advertorial rhetorical logic and grammar, "And what better place to celebrate South Africa than in London which, along with the rest of the UK, boasted the strongest force against apartheid in Western Europe and demonstrated unstinting support during South Africa's long journey to democracy." The Celebrate South Africa festival was hosted by the South African High Commission. Its then High Commissioner, Cheryl Carolus, is now national head of Tourism in South Africa.

McLuskie seems surprised that

> The production... came with an endorsement from none other than Nelson Mandela. Unembarrassed by academic critical theory or a knowing appreciation of the witty paradoxes of global commercialization, he praised the production for its dramatization of 'the universality of ambition, greed and fear' (1999: 155).

McLuskie finds it noteworthy that the emblem of authentic, modern, new South Africa should be unembarrassed by (perhaps she implies he is unaware of?) "the witty paradoxes of global commercialization". His comment comes from a "Letter from Nelson Mandela

to Welcome Msomi. Included in the press release for reviewers of the Globe production in August 1997" (f/n 5: 155). McLuskie does not read Mandela's endorsement of the play in familiarly universal terms, as evidence of his use of this discourse to play on the expectations of the Western media. Neither does she consider that the reproduction of this letter in the press release may signify Msomi's use of the same. The inclusion of this praise from Mandela in a press release to Western reviewers authenticates uMabatha as a South African artifact, and guarantees its accessibility to its market. As Shakespeare functioned to authenticate the original production, so Mandela functions to authenticate the revival.

At the same time as Mandela and Msomi are capitalising on the commodification of Africanness, they are perhaps also trying to point to its humanity. If so, this strategy has not been entirely successful. Despite the renewed potential for cultural (and straightforwardly financial) capital available to the revived uMabatha, and the ways in which Zuluness becomes South Africanness, becomes proud, valuable Africanness in this process, for many reviewers Shakespeare's universal themes remain emotions that Shakespeare demonstrates Africans can also feel. Shakespeare's universality is invoked to prove not only that humanity is shared across "races", but that the nature of the humanity that is shared is defined by Shakespeare, the voice of Western culture, which is splendidly augmented by the spectacle of African tradition. Shakespeare brings the universal themes, and the Africans bring the music and the energetic mass of bodies: "Incorporating Shakespeare's timeless themes of ambition, deceit, love, hate and fear, "Umabatha" dramatizes the history of 19th-century Africa during the Scottish thane Shaka Zulu's reign through song and dance" (www.dailybruin.ucla.edu/ DB/issues /97/10.01/ae.Umabatha. html); "Welcome Msomi has transported Shakespeare's universal story of ambition, greed and fear from the Moors of Scotland to the vast plains of the African continent" (www.rdg.ac.uk/globe/research/ 1997/ OpenSeasonProg.htm). Msomi is not seen as contributing to Western culture through his use of Shakespeare; instead, "Shakespeare's universal themes" are manifest in what can be reduced to the generically "African", to the

single cultural and geographic landscape shared by all Africans, "the vast plains of the African continent".

These themes, in their African manifestation, are expressed through spectacle, song, and dance ("joyous exuberance prevails… [in] authentic songs and chants… authentic tribal ceremonies and customs" [Hallberg, 2001: 80; 81; 86]), not through words. Such a performance of Africanness may be unavoidable. McLuskie suggests that

> the artifacts of traditional culture are so overlaid with the history of their appropriation, and so implicated in the global market, that they have become [following Appiah] 'neo-traditional'. Their celebration involves a denial of modernity, an obfuscation of the real cultural and economic relations of the contemporary African world (1999: 164).

Africanness, however it is presented to the "West", by virtue of the act of presentation, cannot escape becoming a construction most recognizable through a tourist lens. As a result of the discursive systems through which global representation occurs, Africans "doing" Shakespeare at the Globe in the twenty-first century will always also be "doing" Africanness. Perhaps it is at least fitting that Africans themselves are finally benefitting financially from the performance, even if the profit rests in a group of people whose access to cultural capital is determined by their class.

There are many ironies in this use of, and profit from, Shakespeare's global positioning as the essentially human, within the framework of how this positioning has played out in South Africa in the different ways outlined in this thesis. The ironies are encapsulated in the following promotional blurb, provided in the Shakespeare's Globe News Bulletin review of the 1997 production:

> Welcome Msomi's transposition of Shakespeare's story of ambition, greed and fear from the Moors of Scotland to the plains of the African continent was an unmitigated success, displaying both the flexibility of the Globe space and the incredible talent of this visiting company. Welcome Msomi concluded the opening night by declaring: 'Shakespeare is African', to which the multi-national audience cheered enthusiastically (www.rdg.ac.uk/globe/research/BackIssues.htm).

The play, necessarily for its authenticity and concomitant performance value, is ascribed to its African creator, even as the universal elements of the story remain Shakespeare's. The specificities of Zulu history become an undifferentiated African landscape, in phrasing that is repeated in various reviews of the show. Such a "transposition" demonstrates the "flexibility" of Shakespearean space, its ability to hold an almost infinite range of meaning-making practices. At the same time, this triumphant space, the new Globe, is a theatre whose vexed status as an icon of nostalgically-driven nationalism which overlooks class-based deprivation in modern Britain, has been much commented upon (Holderness, 1988). Msomi's transposition also demonstrates the "incredible talent", the abilities of the Africans who have engaged with the English heritage represented by "Shakespeare", and made something which is their own. Finally, Msomi's statement, and the fact of an enthusiastic response from a pointedly "mixed" audience, are presented on a website which promotes international theatre trade with the professional authority of "Shakespeare's" Globe. The declaration "Shakespeare is African" relies on an understanding of, an acquiescence to, and most importantly makes use of, Shakespeare's value in the world cultural market. It is due to colonial history that Shakespeare stands for something "Africa" would want to claim. At the same time as Msomi is claiming access to essential humanity for "Africa", he is claiming access to the commodity value of culture within a world market, for whom the concepts "Shakespeare" and "African" denote a range of performances for profit.

Conclusion

Ngugi wa Thiong'o has vigorously contested the authenticity of what he calls an "Afro-European" literary tradition. This tradition belongs to the petit-bourgeoisie ruling classes which are a creation of colonialism, and is "another hybrid tradition" and not a truly African one: "Afro-European literature can be defined as literature written by Africans in European languages in the era of imperialism." This tradition "is likely to last as long as Africa is under this rule of European capital in a neo-colonial set-up" (1986: 26-7). Insofar as the South African Shakespeare I have sketched here belongs to an elite educated by colonial institutions and offered class mobility through their education, I have indeed described an "Afro-European" tradition. However, where this analysis differs from Ngugi's is in the ascription of sites of cultural ownership, and in the invocation of cultural purity. I contend that in a post-colonial, increasingly globalised world, it is not possible to quarantine culture. This is not meant to override Ngugi's important analysis of cultural imperialism. Rather, it is to insist that the so-called "European" strand of the hybrid is as African as the Africans who transform it.

Ngugi is suspicious of hybridity as an inauthentic descriptor of the "African". This suspicion is shared by many theorists, for different reasons. Hybridity needs to be carefully nuanced in order to denote a cultural condition produced by material histories of inequality. Otherwise it runs the risk, amongst others, of overwriting historical processes and specific group identities. It can easily become a way for the "European" component to dominate and define its "Other" components, especially given ongoing inequities in economic, political, and cultural power in the world. However, hybridity is useful in that it seeks to describe what Bhabha has called a Third Space, a place where the practice of culture, culture-in-action, occurs. This Space, by definition, is elusive, deferring attempts to describe the organism it contains. Nevertheless, hybridity encodes the belief that a way must be found to account for cultural and identity formations, which resists an inaccurate demarcation of the colonised and the colonising into inevitably separate spheres.
The impetus to resist oppositional or binary logic is confirmed by the ways in which the main strands of enquiry undertaken here illustrate that it is not accurate to construct a

history of opposites for South African literary, cultural, or political history. This signals a move away from the logic of apartheid, and towards theories which try to account for, broadly, the actual practice of life as an inevitable cultural mixing.

Radical scholarship, concerned with the socio-political rights of the subject, cannot completely escape the liberal humanism it uses as a springboard to generate oppositional energy. What appear at first sight to be opposing camps, can be seen on closer examination to be parts of a web of influence. Accordingly, English literary studies' critical history draws on itself in order to generate new critical theory within the discipline. This has implications for radical Shakespeare scholarship which have at times been overlooked by proponents eager to oppose a particular tradition of liberal humanism within the field. The development of writing in English in South Africa is implicated in a humanist framework which informed the anti-apartheid struggle. At the same time, it grew out of a liberal tradition which, for all that it has been accused of racism and of entrenching white economic privilege, has resulted in the neo-liberal policies that inform the export of "South African culture" as a commodity. Shakespeare plays a role in packaging this commodity, as "he" played a role in aiding some South African writers to find voices as writers in English.

A category that comes into focus as we review the (economic, race-relations, and educational) history of English in South Africa, and which has an important place in the trajectory outlined above, is class. One of the objections made by critics attempting to resist the naturalisation of the liberal-humanist subject, is the silent inscription of the bourgeois subject as the essential, essentially human subject. This entrenches capitalist economic and social relations as intrinsic to what it means to be human. At the same time, a belief in basic human rights, and in the right of the individual to freedom and equity, are concepts that cannot escape the philosophical and political traditions of liberalism and of humanism. It is more useful to recognise explicitly the roles that class, and class aspiration, have played in the development of modern cultural, literary, and political conditions, within the terms of this inquiry.

I have made use of post-colonial notions of hybridity, resistance, and transformation: theories that recognise the creative potential in the meeting of cultures, even if by force, and that allow for a move beyond the position of victim for the colonised. I have done so in order to explore the existence of a South African Shakespeare, in a way which refuses notions that culture can work in separatist, "own affairs" departments. There is at least one way of reading a South African use of Shakespeare which charts a path "Through Shakespeare's Africa", with Can Themba's article being an example of a transformative use of Shakespeare as a tool of resistance, at the same time as "he" is owned as something personally meaningful for the South African writer who masters "him". In this way it is possible to reformulate the weighting, and to view "[South] Africa's Shakespeare".

Arguably, a "translated, rewritten" (De Grazia & Stallybrass, 1993: 282) Shakespeare has existed in South Africa since Plaatje wrote "him" into being. Furthermore, what the example of Plaatje makes clear is that it was the liberal-humanist tradition criticised by radical Shakespearean scholarship both inside and outside of South Africa which produced those South African writers who claimed Shakespeare for their own, and in so doing forged a political, South African Shakespeare.

However, at the same time as it is possible to trace this tradition of a South African Shakespeare, it is also possible to keep in view both the colonial history from which English literature, with Shakespeare at the helm, developed, and the ways in which Shakespeare has been mobilised by a problematically "liberal" white South African ideology. This second use of Shakespeare not only overwrites key historical colonial conditions, as can be seen in the booklets commemorating the establishment and growth of Maynardville; it also colluded with the entrenchment of apartheid binaries of civilised culture and native tradition.

"South Africa's Shakespeare" is not a singular entity. While growing out of a history of colonial education practices, and informed by apartheid social practices, this figure has had different manifestations in South Africa in the twentieth century. These

manifestations have at times apparently been opposed to each other – so that the uses to which Plaatje or Themba put Shakespeare are in some ways very different from the way in which Shakespeare is used to claim South Africa as an English colony in the discursive establishment of Maynardville as an open-air Shakespeare theatre. However, these different manifestations of Shakespeare, symbolised by the different spaces of Sophiatown and of Maynardville, have culminated in the globalised "African" "Shakespeare" exemplified by Msomi's "Zulu Macbeth". This figure at once draws on stereotypical ideas of "the African", and allows Africans of a certain class to benefit from the commodification of these ideas, selling back to the West its image of "Africa".

One of the implications of this history, of the trajectory of South African Shakespeares that I have traced, is that the "People's Shakespeare" imagined by politically committed anti-apartheid critics may be an unrealisable fiction. But insofar as Africanness has been commodified through the invocation of Shakespeare as a universal storyteller, the kind of "People's Shakespeare" that now exists is implicated in processes of economic and cultural globalisation. The issues raised by radical South African scholars, particularly Orkin and Johnson, about the role of Shakespeare in South Africa's pre- , apartheid, and post- apartheid education systems, are now irrevocably inflected by this performance of an African Shakespeare for profit. It is no longer enough to bemoan oppressive cultural practices, or to wish to recoup Shakespeare for "The People", or "Against Apartheid". We need to acknowledge the complex history of Shakespeare's positioning and use in South African literary history, and the connections between this history and other interlinked histories in the development of the categories of class, race, and gender, in South Africa. To do so will be to assist us in understanding why "new" South African cultural expressions, such as the revived uMabatha, have taken the form that they have, and how they are linked to neo-liberalism as an economic and as a cultural philosophy. This is imperative to facilitating dialogue about aspects of South African identities that for too long have been constructed as oppositional, and as separate: race is in many ways still the primary category in this regard. To approach a South African Shakespeare in this

way is to attempt to get beyond the anodyne notion of a "People's Shakespeare", as a response to the colonial and apartheid mobilisations of the texts and of the icon.

The promise of political efficacy, of a liberatory Shakespeare, in radical Shakespearean criticism must be problematised on its own theoretical terms, and in terms of what it may be able to offer South Africa. There has not been a politically liberatory South African use of Shakespeare, a Shakespeare Against Apartheid, in the terms imported from Anglo-American political theories. Shakespeare is not 'of' 'the people' of South Africa, or 'for' them. This does not mean Shakespeare is not useful to South Africa, as a source of literary inspiration, as a tool for political purpose, as a source of hybrid, transformative creation. Nor does it mean that Shakespeare cannot "be" something more personal to individual subjects, something that cannot be quantified in terms of use-value, although this last is more difficult to access through written sources, and falls largely outside the scope of this thesis. Rather, it means Shakespeare in South Africa is likely to remain middle-class - by virtue of the history of colonial, followed by apartheid, education practices, as well as by virtue of the Shakespeare industry's power in a globalised economy.

Within the oppressive socio-political context of South Africa in the twentieth century, leading up to and including the formation of de jure apartheid, one kind of South African Shakespeare was able to be a tool of resistance which can be read as transformative and creative. In Shakespeare in South Africa, David Johnson devotes a chapter to "Shakespeare and Apartheid: The 1950s" (1996: 147-180). Because Johnson sees Shakespeare's utilisations in South Africa as ultimately all problematic in their relative endorsement of apartheid policies, his project closes down the possibilities of a resistant (and therefore, perhaps, legitimate) South African response to Shakespeare as a body of texts, as a legacy, as a colonial tool, as a literary influence. He contrasts Shakespeare as "he" is utilised at South African universities (as part of a "contradictory cluster of values" that oppose apartheid while fitting into the apartheid education system) to Shakespeare at schools, where "he" is a "supporter of the state" (173). Within this framework, Johnson

also locates a well-intentioned but liberally hamstrung "Shakespeare opposed to racism" in a tradition which includes Plaatje, Dhlomo, and "the liberal critics" (173). I have traced a South African Shakespeare from Plaatje to Themba, which I have characterised as a subversive, *and* petit-bourgeois, African voice. Trapping Shakespeare into a binary where "he" must either be a political radical, anachronistically and theoretically problematically "against Apartheid", or where "he" is a misinformed humanist unwittingly endorsing oppressive policies, is to fall into the same trap which sees culture as either European or African. Such a response overlooks the places of interaction, response, reclamation, subversion, and creative formation which must be taken into account when examining a colonial or a post-colonial space. This unfairly and unrealistically traps generations of hard-working, responsive, inspired and engaged South Africans into passive victimhood.

This thesis has sketched an attempt to offer an alternative, a way to break the binary Shakespeare-culture-civilisation-West/ Africa (with all its concomitant Othered associations), while still acknowledging the presence of the hegemony of Western power. The commodification of "new South Africanness" is one result of the world order that exists as a result of this hegemony. It is true that without the mission schools and everything that came with them, men such as Plaatje, Abrahams, Themba, and Msomi would not have had the relationship with Shakespeare that they did. It is also true, however, that they were not passive recipients of a foreign culture; that the personal journeys on which they embarked, and the discursive tracks they left, were every bit as African as they were. So was the Shakespeare they took with them.

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